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ABSTRACT

The main theme of the conference was the politics of adult education research. The following papers from the conference are included in this compilation, following the opening address (Nisbet): "Some Tension Points in Adult Education Research" (Bryant and Usher); "Key Issues in Adult Education Research" (Gerver); "Some Issues in Adult Education Research" (Jones); "Key Issues in Adult Education Research" (McIntosh); "Key Issues in Adult Education Research" (Oglesby); "Political Repression of Adult Education in the U.S., 1919-1920" (Hellyer); "Discipline-Based Research: Briefing Paper" (Squires); "Changing Perceptions of the Philosophy of Education and Adult Education" (Lawson); "A Researchable Politics of Adult Education?" (Griffin); "The Study of Adult Education, the Subject Specialist and Research" (Bright); "The Theory-Practice Problem and Psychology as a Foundation Discipline in Adult Education" (Usher); "Subject-Based Research" (Forester); "Evaluation Research in Adult and Continuing Education: An Introduction" (Percy); "Evaluation in Adult Education: Some Points for Discussion" (Jones); "Political Perspectives on Adult Education Research with Particular Reference to Methodology" (Alexander); "Called to Account: Accountability and Objectivity" (Armstrong); "Education and Older Adults--A 'Mapping Exercise'" (Withnall); "The Use of Computers in Course Programme Evaluation: A Discussion Paper" (Thomas); "Evaluation of Learning Activity in Voluntary Organisations" (Barnes); "Evaluation Research in Adult and Continuing Education: A Postscript" (Percy); "Workshop on Action/Participatory Research" (Miller); "Workshop Report" (Brown); "Conceptualizing International Adult Education as a Field of Study and Practice" (Boucouvalas); "International Adult Education: Comparative Analysis of the Younger Adult" (Haffenden), "Education for Change: Some Issues in International Comparative Adult Education" (McIntosh); and "Report of the Kellogg Fellows to the International and Comparative Adult Education Forum" (McIntosh). Conference participants are listed. (MN)

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SCUTREA

Sixteenth Annual
Conference
1986

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STANDING CONFERENCE ON UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS
(SCUTREA)

PAPERS FROM THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE (1986)

EDITOR: Miriam Zukas (Hon Secretary)

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SCUTREA - Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

SCUTREA's objective is to further the study of, and research into, the education of adults.

By means of its annual conferences, seminars, study groups and published papers, it provides an opportunity for adult educators to share experiences and to discuss research priorities.

Membership is open to United Kingdom and Eire university departments and institutions which provide courses in adult education leading to awards of those universities; or to individuals and departments undertaking regular and substantial research projects in the field of adult education.

Chairman: Professor J S Marriott, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT

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Further information about SCUTREA can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, at the above address.

Some copies of previous conference papers (1970-1985) are still available and may be ordered from:

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
De Montfort House
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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The main theme of the 1986 SCUTREA conference was 'The Politics of Adult Education Research', with a keynote address by Professor John Nisbet on 'The Politics of Educational Research' to start the conference off.

Five seminar group leaders were selected to lead discussions on 'Key Issues in Adult Education Research' and asked to prepare a stimulus paper which could circulated before the conference. They were asked to think about the following issues:

1. What is research
2. The funding of research
3. Methodology
4. Selection of research topics and styles of research
5. Publication and dissemination of research
6. Effects of research on practice of adult education
7. The latent functions of research
8. Expectations of practitioners of research
9. What adult education research is needed? By who? For what purpose?

These stimulus papers are reproduced in the proceedings. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the five groups for discussion, and there are one or two reports on these discussions.

Following the seminar groups, the conference again divided, this time into three parallel groups considering 'The Politics of Research into the Education of Adults'. One group considered discipline-based research, the second evaluation research and the third participatory/action research. Papers prepared for the first two groups and a report on the third are included in the proceedings.

Once more, the variety of papers reflects the very diverse concerns of conference participants, and the complexities of such a conference theme.

A post-conference was held which was designed to look at some of the conceptual issues involved in comparative exchanges. Two papers written for that conference are also included in the proceedings, as well as a summary of a reportback by the final leg of the Kellogg British/North America Exchange.

In order to reduce production costs, it was decided to reproduce papers in camera-ready form. There is, therefore, some discrepancy in type-face and style in the proceedings.

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

John Nisbet
University of Aberdeen

Introduction

I was invited to cover the whole field of educational research, leaving to the others who follow to discuss the issues in adult education research. The events which have influenced educational research generally in the past 25 years, and especially in the past 10 years, affect adult education research equally - the same hopes and promises and disappointments, the same threats and conflicts. And the conclusion which I reach at the end, about how research should develop in the years ahead, is one which I think you will find is very much in line with principles which adult education has observed over the long history of its development throughout the 20th century.

I propose to adopt a wide definition of educational research as including experimental designs, surveys, curriculum development, evaluation, case studies and action research - a range of activities which have in common (and this is my definition of educational research) that they are 'careful systematic attempts to understand the educational process, and through understanding to improve its efficiency' (Nisbet and Entwistle, in Taylor, 1973). Note the two parts of that definition: understanding and improvement; analysis and application. I would argue that educational research must have both elements. In particular, it must have the second, namely a practical objective - if not, it is psychological or sociological research or historical research, or something other than educational research. And that practical element brings educational research into the realm of politics.

Politics is about power and decision-making. More precisely (OED), it is 'the science dealing with the form, organisation and administration of a state'. In reviewing the form, organisation and administration of education research, I shall be looking primarily at power and decision-making: how should research be organised and funded, what are the priorities for research in education, and - the crucial question - who decides?

The essential theme of my talk can be stated simply. In the past 25 years, educational research has seen remarkable growth - such that across the world, educational research is now an integral part of modern administrative procedure (as I was able to conclude in a recent review of educational research in 8 countries for UNESCO). But there is a price to be paid for this growth. 'The cost of expansion has been a progressive loss of freedom by the research community' (Humes, 1986). In the past ten years especially, there has been increasing central control of research in education. The 1985 World Year Book of Education (Nisbet & Nisbet, 1985) has evidence of increasing government control of research - in England, Scotland and Australia, in USA and Canada, in France, in Sweden, in the Netherlands, in Latin America and in countries of the Eastern bloc.

The first part of my paper is concerned with tracing the course of this development in our own country. What has happened to educational research, and why? Is Humes right in alleging that

> Research has become another arm of control, a particularly effective one since its ostensible function is to promote rather than suppress legitimate enquiry and debate. By . . . seeming to encourage educational research, educational administrators bolster their own pretensions as benign facilitators . . . (However) there is no doubt that he who pays the piper calls the tune . . . It is no doubt convenient for those involved in commissioning and accepting research contracts to imagine that the exercise is one in which equal partners respect each other's contribution. In many cases, however, this is simply an elaborate ritual designed to disguise the degree of direction on one side and submission on the other.

Researchers are no longer able to decide priorities in educational research. Who then should decide?

The concluding part of my paper attempts to build a constructive answer to the question at issue which is how to secure an appropriate balance between interests, in both senses of that word: the interests of the researchers and the interests of those who commission research. The answer to that, I think is to bring in a third element, the practitioners, the teachers.

But teachers too can exert a limiting or inhibiting influence on research. Many teachers see researchers as interlopers, seeking power without responsibility, operating a 'smash and grab' procedure, out of touch with what are deemed 'relevant' issues.

The dispute over who should define 'relevance' dates back to Rousseau, who wrote in 1762:

> People are always telling me to make practical suggestions. You might as well tell me to suggest improvements which can be incorporated with the wrong methods at present in use.

School-based research, under the control of teachers, runs the risk of being amateur in the worst sense, small-scale, trivial, badly done, restricting research within the limits of inflexible classroom practice, organising radical issues out of debate and treating the essential nature of education as unproblematic. But school-based research can also be the starting point of a real solution, as I hope to show eventually. Educational research today is caught between powerful pressures from policy-makers and practitioners, between the devil and the deep blue sea, and both are imposing pressures towards conformity. The conventional view of research is that it is a pressure for change: today, as in Orwell's 1984, it is in danger of becoming a means of reaffirming established or fashionable patterns of thought.

The Growth of Research - Recent History

It is only within the past 25 years that research in education has received public funding on any substantial scale. Prior to 1960, research was mainly a spare-time amateur affair, unorganised and often ignored until its findings had percolated through into generally accepted values - un uncontrolled, slow, inefficient and (to administrators) sometimes inconvenient process. (OECD Report - 1960 figures see p. 9).

There was growing interest in exploiting the contribution of the social sciences in guiding policy, administration and practice, and in the years 1965-1970 public funding of educational research and development expanded at an unprecedented rate. In Britain public expenditure on research in education multiplied ten-fold between 1964 and 1969, while in the USA expenditure doubled each year from 1964 through 1967. Never again can we expect to see such rapid growth.

But the price to be paid for access to public funds is accountability: the inevitable consequence of the increase in funds was a claim from the administrators for a greater say in how the funds were to be spent. One of the first politicians to make this claim was none other than Margaret Thatcher, when she was Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1970:

> There was clearly only one direction that the Department's research policy could sensibly take. It had to move from a basis of patronage - the rather passive support of ideas which were essentially other people's related to problems which were often of other people's choosing - to a basis of commission. This meant the active initiation by the Department (of Education) on problems of its own choosing, within a procedure and timetable which were relevant to its needs.

This view was quickly taken up in the Rothschild Report of 1971, which produced the crude formula of the 'customer-contractor principle', defining the power relationship between client (i.e. government department) and contractor (i.e. researcher): 'The customer says what he wants; the contractor (the researcher) does it if he can; and the customer pays'.

This method of deciding how research should be funded was widely challenged at the time. A policy statement by the United Kingdom Social Science Research Council (SSRC, 1971) argued: 'It is not so much a matter of an ordered hierarchy of priorities, as a process of grasping at opportunities presented by an almost accidental coagulation of interest among a group of able research workers around a chosen problem in order to shift a frontier of knowledge forward'. But the idea of 'an almost accidental coagulation', however accurate as a description of the research process, could not survive the energy crisis of 1973 and the economic constraints of the years which followed. The need to cut back expenditure made decisions on priorities inevitable, and increasingly these decisions were made by central government. Now research which is not linked to policy is at risk of being seen as a dispensible luxury, and researchers have to be ready to tackle major policy issues as legitimate topics for inquiry, and sometimes even as the only topics worth studying.

The consequence when politicians decide priorities is vividly illustrated by an analysis of the 1984 research spending by DES (the the latest published figures - see Taylor, in Chapter 3 of the 1985 World Yearbook of Education):

Pre-school	1%
Special needs	9%
Vocational education	18%
Curriculum	6%
Teacher training	1%
Management	8%

Further education	3%
Higher education	2%
Adult education	½%
Assessment	52%

Can anyone claim that this accurately represents the priorities of our time? Since 1984, the balance has changed by the massive funds being injected by Manpower Services and the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative; and in the meantime the Schools Council has been disbanded, and the Centre for Educational Disadvantage closed down, and in Scotland we have had a bitter struggle in the past year to preserve the SCRE (established in 1928 as the first education research organisation in Europe) - the Director of SCRE took early retirement, the Deputy Director and Assistant Director were dismissed and several of the staff had their contracts terminated. Similar events have occurred in the Netherlands, and in France.

Why has this happened? To understand the reasons, we have to look back to events in the 1970s. The phase of massive expansion in research expenditure in the 1960s was followed by a period of concern at the failure of research to come up with solutions to problems. Perhaps we claimed too much for research and more precisely, the wrong things were expected. Sir William Pile (Permanent Secretary, DES), said of education research in 1976:

> Part of it is rubbish, and another part leads nowhere . . . It is, I am afraid, exceptional to find a piece of research that really hits the nail on the head and tells you pretty clearly what is wrong or what is happening or what should be done . . . People say they have done some research when they really mean they have stopped to think for three minutes.

This implies that 'good' research is research which can be used directly and immediately to answer questions and solve problems. On this view, research is the handmaiden of policy: decisions are made by politicians and administrators, the researcher's task is to provide an information base and then to work out the most effective means of implementing decisions. Much of the dissatisfaction with the lack of impact of research is attributable to our failure to limit ourselves to these narrowly defined expectations, our reluctance to be limited within the confines of currently accepted policy. To the administrator, research findings often appear unrealistically impractical. (The point can be illustrated by the story of the traveller who asked a local the way to a neighbouring village. 'Well, if I were you,' was the reply, 'I wouldn't start from here'. That is how the policy-maker often sees the advice of the researcher).

There is also the suspicion that the only ones who have derived benefit from the investment in educational R & D are the researchers themselves. Being isolated from the practical constraints of the 'real world', so the criticism goes, they divert public money to academic interests of their own instead of to the problems which require solutions. And the solution adopted by the administrators was to take the choice of research priorities out of the hands of the researchers and put them in the hands of the administrators. Since research could not give direction to policy, then the influence should be reversed and policy makers should be given control of research, allowing policy priorities to determine the choice and design of research. If those who are in contact with the 'real world' take over the management of research, so the assumption goes, impact will be improved, relevance will be greater, and the risk of wasted money will be avoided.

Consequently, decisions on research priorities are now often made by those who are not themselves directly involved in research. This mode of working is familiar to the economist, the engineer, and the agricultural specialist, but less common in legal and medical matters. The administrator who controls research funds now expects to be involved in the initial decisions on the topic of inquiry, the time scale, the personnel required, the design and of course the cost. When the project is funded, there will be continuing interest (or interference, as it may appear) in monitoring what is being done through an advisory committee (sometimes a steering committee) and regular reporting. Tighter control may sometimes be imposed by 'stepped funding' in which funds for each stage are conditional on approval of a report on the previous one (an impossible procedure to operate without year-long delays between the stages). The mode of reporting and arrangements for publishing and discussing the findings may also be specified in the contract (though the more common complaint is that research sponsors fail to set aside money, time or staff for diffusion). The contract may require surrender of copyright to the sponsors and their right to veto should they find the results not to their liking.

Thus research is in danger of becoming wholly directed and censored by people who are not themselves researchers and who have a vested interest in the outcomes. Criticism of a policy is not likely to be encouraged; important issues are organised out of debate.

(Fortunately, many of those responsible for funding research are aware of these dangers. It is important also that researchers should be aware of the pressures on those who control public money for the funding of research. Both sides need to understand the requirements and constraints of the other).

Research managed by policy-makers (administrators or politicians) tend to be restricted to what is compatible with existing policy, is liable to be cumbersome, limited and too late with its results, dealing with yesterday's problems and often wrong in its anticipated priorities.

More seriously, it reduces the research agenda to a series of simplistic problems, dealing with short-term issues, neglecting what Bondi (1983) termed 'strategic research': 'that grey zone of researches that . . . are not immediately of use to the customer, but lay the foundations for being able to answer questions that may be put in the future'.

What is the role of research, what are its functions in the context of the 1980s?

Direct functions include:

1. providing a data base for decision - through survey
2. implementing decisions - through development
3. monitoring - through evaluation

There is also another more political function:

4. (a) legitimating decisions, giving them credibility (a suspect function), insofar as information conveys power, research strengthens the hand of any group which can produce research findings to support its preferred viewpoint. (Even to describe assertions as 'research' strengthens their impact, until the speaker is challenged for 'evidence': the scientific model is implicit throughout this interaction.). Administrators commission policy-oriented research to strengthen their hand against the many pressure groups in the policy-making arena. In the view of the administrators, pressure groups are those who seek to further their own policies, whereas administrators see themselves as neutral to the policy they implement. Information thus weakens the power of those who play on ignorance or twist facts to suit their private ends. This however assumes that research is value free, or at least that research makes explicit the values on which it is based.

   and

   (b) for those without power, challenging authority. Coleman observed that 'social policy research is most often used by those without direct control over policy, who challenge the policies of those in positions of authority' (Husen and Kogan, 1984); and this is perhaps one reason for hostility to research.

Finally, the indirect function:

5. The most important function of research (in my view) is an indirect one - creating awareness, 'problem-setting rather than problem-solving' (Schon, 1971), creating an agenda of concern.

Thus research is useful not just when it offers solutions to problems, but in a different way, indirectly, by defining the problem to which solutions must be sought. This is the most important influence of research, though it may be difficult for the politicians and administrators to accept.

> The impact of research is essentially in determining what kinds of questions and evidence are seen as important, and how they are seen - how practitioners and researchers (and administrators and policy makers) structure their perceptions of their work. In this way, research creates an agenda of concern. (Broadfoot & Nisbet, 1981).

But more than this, research is not 'establishing truth' in education, but opening up new perspectives, and creating the questioning attitude which encourages being able to see these new perspectives - to escape from one's preconceptions.

Thus the most important influence of research is indirect, and long-term. Weiss (1977), for example, described the process as

> a gradual accumulation of research results which can lead to serious and far-reaching changes in the way people and governments address their problems.

Taylor (1973) suggested a similar function for research:

> For the most part, the influence of research has been to sensitize. It has indicated the importance of certain problems and the danger of the unselfconscious use of certain procedures, without necessarily providing clear-cut calculations of advantage or a firm foundation for decision.

The indirect, long-term influence of fundamental research is to create the theoretical context in which day-to-day issues are perceived, to write an agenda of concern. New concepts or structures or theories are introduced and gradually absorbed into popular thought and discussion, until they become a new climate of opinion, variously described as a 'prevailing view' (Cronbach and Suppes 1969) or 'a cumulative altering of conceptions of human behaviour' (Getzels et al, 1968). Administrators and politicians respond to the 'resonance' of research findings, often to a filtered, out-of-date 'pop science'. As Keynes observed in the field of economics: 'Practical men who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist'.

This kind of attitude, the 'generation of uncertainty' - the questioning approach, thinking as distinct from action - is at the heart of the research attitude. Uncertainty, however, is difficult to reconcile with action and decision, and consequently policy makers and practitioners tend to impose constraints on research:

> Can national authorities sponsor the generation of uncertainty? . . Policy makers foreclose on issues . . . Social science can keep open the space. (Husen and Kogan, 1984)

In a recent address (Bancroft, 1984) to the Royal Society of Arts in London, the former Head of the Home Civil Service caricatured this issue by reporting a spoof notice which had once been circulated among his colleagues. (He commented: 'The intervening years have shown that it wasn't such a spoof after all'.)

> The general principle approved by management is that thinking is acceptable if it is secondary to, and takes place at the same time as, some activity directly approved in the course of the planning priorities exercise. But in other circumstances it is hoped that any thinking that is found necessary will done in staff's spare time or at weekends.
>
> For a trial period monthly returns should be made of any inadvertent thinking that takes place during working hours, showing the approximate duration and depth. These should be submitted along with the returns of sick leave and security breaches for the period . . .
>
> In the face of more demanding programmes than ever the Department's priorities clearly require more emphasis on outputs and less on inputs: in other words more action and less reflection. Since staff resources do not permit of both it follows that the latter must be sacrificed.

The importance of this indirect function of research - developing awareness, understanding and insight, sensitizing, encouraging reflection - all this is not just for policy-makers, administrators and politicians. It is equally important for practitioners, for teachers. By bringing in the teachers, we can redress the imbalance in the politics of educational research and point the way to a solution to our dilemma.

There is a dangerous temptation for researchers to enter into an unholy alliance with the bureaucrats in order to dominate the third group, the teachers. Among these three groups - researchers, administrators and teachers - any two together can dominate the third. But for an elite group of researchers to ally themselves with authority to manage the system, though at first sight an apparently attractive role, is potentially divisive and surely a mistake. It puts research into a purely technocratic role; it leaves the researcher wholly dependent on his powerful partner. In such an alliance, the bureaucrats would soon decide to 'go it alone', adopting the techniques of research to fit their own priorites and to legitimate their policy decisions.

The strongest defence against the misuse of research in this way lies in an educated teaching profession, and in developing the teachers' understanding of research and their capacity also to 'do it themselves'. School-based research, the 'teacher-as-researcher' movement or 'action research' is the form this move has taken. In school-based research, teachers apply the techniques of research to their own work; they define the problems to be researched; they investigate and reflect on their own practice.

I have already mentioned the risks of this style of research: the dangers of triviality, parochialism, superficiality. But essentially is is a matter of trying to get teachers (and students too) to adopt a research approach, a questioning attitude. By enlarging the pool of informed practitioners, by creating a climate of opinion favourable to research, by establishing a questioning attitude of mind, by opposing the technocratic alliance of reseacher and bureaucrat, it could change our own 'agenda of concern'. If the action research movement can go beyond what Karl Popper calls 'routine problems', it can lead out of the constraints in which traditional research is now caught into more challenging questions.

> It may be that the very act of teachers addressing their own classroom problems from a research perspective will be the most fertile soil for educational research to grow in. Fundamental research can grow from modest questioning. Collaborative research can be developed in quite a different way, retaining its democratic devolvement of responsibility so as to prevent the emergence of an elite group of researchers in alliance with those responsible for management and control. If it can be developed so as to provide teachers (and administrators and parents and all those concerned with education) with the means of improving their own understanding, then its effect will be to put educational studies into a questioning framework. To do this, it must go beyond 'routine problems', and be concerned instead with the parameters used for thinking about education, redefining issues. and restructuring perceptions. This is no small task, but one well worth attempting. (Broadfoot and Nisbet 1981 p. 121)

Each of the groups whom I have considered has an important contribution to make, the researchers, the policy-makers and the teachers. In all these three fields - theory, policy and practice - there is a crisis of confidence in educational research, a lack of belief in the capacity of educational research to do anything useful. There is also a lack of mutual confidence among the three groups. Like a three-legged stool, educational research depends on all three - theory, policy and practice; and yet their requirements seem at first sight to be incompatible. If these requirements cannot be reconciled, then the outlook for education research is bleak. Thus the theme of this conference is more important today than ever before. We have to resist the instrumental view that the value of inquiry is to be judged simply by the criterion of its implications for action. Research can make an effective contribution to action by fostering a questioning approach. If it does this, we may then be nearer to realizing the ideal expressed by Whitehead (1932) some fifty years ago:

> Education should begin in research and end in research . . . An education which does not begin by evoking initiative and end by encouraging it is wrong. For its whole aim is the production of active wisdom.

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SOME TENSION POINTS IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

Ian Bryant and Robin Usher
University of Southampton

Introduction

The main thrust of this paper is the relationship between research and practice which we take to be a matter of particular concern for university adult educators. We engage in personal and/or contract research; through our teaching we are ourselves practitioners; because of the nature of our students who tend, in the main, to be 'front line' practitioners we have a responsibility to establish links between research findings and the requirements of practice. With this in mind, therefore, we have selected the following issues for examination:

- styles of research in adult education
- effects of research on the practice of adult education
- expectations arising from research on the practice of adult education
- publication and dissemination.

We have concentrated our attention on action research for reasons given below, and we use this as a vehicle for examining the above issues.

Action research as a preferred style of research

We would maintain that action research has become the preferred style of research in adult education. This is an interesting development which, because of its inherent strengths and weaknesses, exemplifies many important issues in adult education research.

Both the current major initiatives in externally-funded adult education research - REPLAN and the DES Innovative Projects - have tended to have a bias towards the action research style. Certainly, in the Department of Adult Education at Southampton both the REPLAN and the Innovative Projects research are based on the action mode. Another project funded by PICKUP has an action research component.

How are we to account for the current fashion for action research? Part of the explanation must lie in the fact that for the funder or sponsor it offers the opportunity to be identified with 'initiatives' of an apparently dynamic kind. The possibility of greater 'value for money' is implied through the stress on both diagnosis and innovative provision. Correspondingly, given the scarcity of funds for research and the current emphasis on the accumulation of research contracts as a mark of 'excellence' and as a license for continued institutional survival, those who seek research funds often feel the need to build an action component into their proposals. Increasingly, there is an implicit recognition that in the competition for funds research must be 'relevant', 'practical', and in the 'real world'. Action research is supposed to demonstrate a commitment to these desirables.

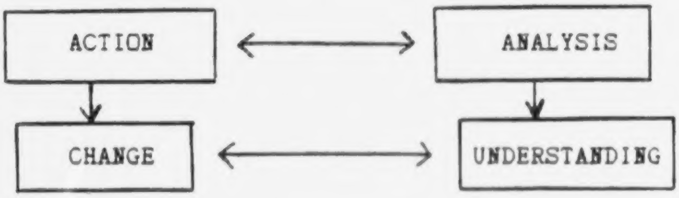
At the same time, of course, action research as a form of investigation has a strong theoretical warrant in interactionist requirements to study the situated aspects of human conduct by getting involved - not simply as a participant observer but as an active change agent. Furthermore, action research is clearly congruent with andragogical models. Educational provision is viewed as a dynamic process of adjustment to emergent needs and an impositional mode is rejected in favour of change through negotiation.

The relationship betwen research and practice, particularly as it is mediated through the teaching of adult education studies, is also important in this context. Action research more readily facilitates links between research and practice than conventional styles of investigation, with their emphasis on linear models of research utilization. Action research findings can be 'translated' into practice and its methods and procedures can stimulate and support practitioner-based inquiry.

Essentially, therefore, the current emphasis on action research is no coincidence. It arises from the pragmatics of funding and the priorities of research policy, current models of practice in adult education and the need for clearer and closer links betwen research and practice. All these are undoubted strengths. We would maintain, however, that there are corresponding problems - these are inherent in action research as a style of research, but they also point to wider problems in adult education research generally. In order to bring these to the forefront we would like to examine action research in more detail.

Process and structure in action research

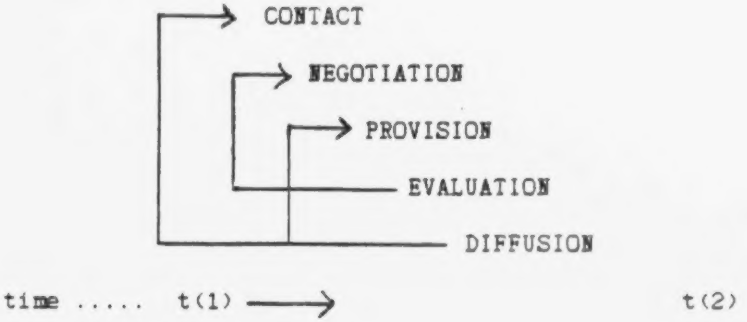
We consider action research to offer an opportunity in principle for the enhancement of reflective practice by all the actors who have a stake in a given project. Our underlying conception is that the interplay of action and research has a dual purpose - the initiation and understanding of change. The components and dynamics of this process can be represented as follows:



Action and analysis incorporate various methods by which the goals of understanding and change are to be achieved. But there is an inherent tension in action research in the conflict between an ideal of generating reflective practice and the actual career of a project, in which there are a number of possible routes through the process and where there will be disagreements between the various stakeholders as to where to place the emphasis at any given time.

The immediate context of action research is the provider-client relationship in which 'action' and 'change' are concerned with making available or extending provision to a particular constituency. This process can be represented in terms of a 'cyclical' or 'feedback' model of overlapping and highly contingent operations:

Action involving.........



The emergent characteristics of action research are evident from the very first exercises in contacting a likely clientele. 'Contact' has aspects of capture and focussing (e.g. through some form of outreach activity) in which an audience becomes defined through the process of the contact activity itself. Pre-defined rules of inclusion (e.g. as suggested by previous researchers or programmes, or other directives whether or not so grounded) are quite likely to need amendment; conversely, ad hoc procedures may later become more formalised.

Once a clientele is at least provisionally defined, andragogical models suggest that 'success ' requires the 'negotiation' of programmes both collectively and individually. Such negotiation does not simply precede provision; it is rather an integral component of the actual learning process as an experiential resource. The goal is the development of a working contract (subject to revision as circumstances change) to commit project partners (including clients) to aspects of the programme. 'Provision' itself involves the gathering and disposition of resources to implement such a contract.

'Evaluation' is often presented as following provision (e.g. in an impact study), but has little value for the client as a post hoc exercise. Ideally, evaluation within a programme generates data to be made available to all parties in the re-negotiation of continuing provision. It differs from the formal reporting to project sponsors in that its immediate intent is the communication of information of direct practical value to those with a current stake in the project.

In terms of the process as described, 'change' is represented by the measured difference in both provider and client activity and understanding between t(1) and t(2). In reality, there will be a contractually-fixed time limit within which the action researcher will be required to 'deliver the goods'to clients in terms of provision, and at the end of which sponsors will expect a formal and final report. Although the management of time is a continuous feature of any type of research project, in action research it has a particular salience because of the necessity to balance the varying claims on the investigator/provider's time.

In effect, the action researcher is operating under at least two sorts of contract - those negotiated with clients as above, and those agreed with sponsors. In addition, there is an 'agreement with the self' to set aside time for reflective analysis. These demands are not always congruent, and although the action researcher may call upon the assistance of a steering committee, collective advice may not resolve the issue of competing claims or multiple roles.

We need to consider the nature of claims as group requirements, and as a structural complement to the notion of action research as a process we can consider two sorts of groups as having an interest in action research - stakeholders and audiences. In practice, membership will overlap both within and between categories, but the main distinction is that between the primary agents who give effect to and are affected by particular projects, and the critical publics for such projects. They can be represented as follows:

Groups with an interest in action research as......

STAKEHOLDERS AUDIENCES

← sponsors →

← steering committees →

STAKEHOLDERS	AUDIENCES
researchers	client communities
providers	the education profession
clients	

A further distinction is possible between stakeholders in terms of the nature of their participation in, and their relative influences over, project decisions at different stages in the process. Indeed, one of the characteristics of action research as compared to some other forms of investigation is the inherently 'political' nature of stakeholder behaviour as a feature of the action-change dynamic. Each group has a vested interest in the control of both the process and the outcomes of project activity.

Implications for adult education research

By combining the processual and structural aspects of action research it becomes possible to locate a number of actual and potential tension points which illustrate in general terms some of the key issues in adult education research. We discuss these below in terms of assertions which are best treated as hypotheses. A number of related questions are raised which require a fuller examination than is possible here. This selected list is offered as a starting point for analysis.

1. *The contract between sponsors and researchers.* If the adult education researcher is committed to change through action and understanding, there is a source of tension in that sponsors may want action and/or understanding but not change. What, therefore, is the implication of this in terms of the framing of research proposals which can both secure and protect such a commitment?

2. *The promise of results in securing client co-operation.* To be willing to participate in research, clients must perceive some tangible 'payoff', a result that will give them something that they value. This may generate two different kinds of urgency. The first is that whatever the goals and style of research, there must be some emphasis on the production of findings. The second follows from the fact that all research projects are finite in time. Such urgency may generate a dynamic which does not always culminate in expected 'payoffs' to clients, particularly in the short term. How, therefore, can projects avoid producing client disapppointment and cynicism through the 'disappearing researcher' phenomenon and unfulfilled expectations?

3. *Protecting and managing providers' responsibilities.* Increasingly, and by its very nature, adult education research tends to spill out beyond

conventional and narrowly-defined educational considerations into those which encompass welfare, employment, race and gender issues. Project resources and researchers' time may become severly stretched in addressing issues which are unanticipated in the original proposals, yet which cannot be ignored as the dynamics of the research unfold. In this context, the responsibilities of the researcher as a provider are potentially boundless. It is one thing to be a change agent but quite another to become responsible for the problems of the world. Is there, then, a need for guidelines that will protect the researcher? We would probably agree on the need for guidelines to protect the researcher from 'unreasonable' sponsorship restrictions. But we may also need some 'action principles' to help researchers who are both investigators and change agents cope with the 'excessive' demands inevitably generated by action research projects.

4. *The impetus to produce results*. 'Results' are not viewed in the same way by the different stakeholders and audiences. Sponsors do see action research as ending and there is pressure on researchers to come up with a definitive product in as short a time as possible. Although we have earlier implied that providers and researchers may be one and the same, this is not always the case and conflict is a real possibility - for example, providers may want results that do not challenge conventional practices or controls, or which do not involve a redeployment of scarce resources. Clients, as we have seen, want changes for the better and have reasonable expectations of continuity. Professional audiences want sound and significant educational findings. Researchers, particularly those on short-term contracts, want evidence to support a new contract. Clearly, these requirements are extremely difficult to reconcile. How, therefore, can research reports 'construct' results which accurately portray what happened yet at the same time adequately reflect the value of projects to all interested parties?

5. *Generalising and disseminating findings.* If the function of research is to generate 'practical knowledge', then there will be a more specific and utililitarian intent than in conventional forms of inquiry. In focussing on what is likely to be a unique configuration of enabling, inhibiting and inertial structures and values within a specific arena of activity, research tends to be idiographic rather than nomothetic. It is certainly true for case study research and probably also of action research in general. This gives rise to another source of tension since sponsors want to be identified with results of a general significance beyond what may be warranted. In 'owning' the findings of research, can sponsors be persuaded to recognize and convey its proper limitations whilst at the same time preserving their enthusiasm for supporting future projects?

6. *Research, practice and professional communities.* We would take the view that it is difficult to conceive of adult education research as 'disembodied' from practice, as 'research for its own sake'. This is both the result of, and has been reinforced by, the trend towards action research as the preferred style of research. At the same time, though, there is a danger of such research *becoming* practice - a form of social engineering. There is an important sense in which research, however action-oriented, functional and participative it may be, must still remain recognizably *research*. Is it possible, therefore, to strike a balance betwen research that is grounded in and thereby informs practice, but which is not simply a relabelling of practice? Professional communities have an important role to play here since researchers clearly have a responsibility towards them. Yet what is the nature of this responsibility and how can profesional communities discharge their necessary 'validating' role without being unduly restrictive?

Conclusions.

A number of trends both internal and external are propelling adult education towards a more action-oriented mode of research. The result can be seen as desirable in the sense that this style of research corresponds more closely to the inner dynamics of adult education than pseudo-distanced and linear models of research practice would do. Certainly, a more fruitful interchange between research and practice is likely to come about.

Yet, as we have tried to show, there are inherent problems. These can only be addressed if action research is situated within the wider context of the complete career of a project, since it is only in this way that both structural and processual factors can be analysed. 'Tension points' then become apparent which are inherent in the dynamics of action-oriented research. In believing that adult education research and practice can - and indeed must - be linked, we recognize the need to explore the nature of this linkage in order to help resolve its problematic features for all action research participants and their audiences.

KEY ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH: QUESTIONS FROM OUTDOORS

Elisabeth Gerver
Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

INTRODUCTION

As an intruder in SCUTREA, and an outsider in adult education, I should like to pose a few questions as starting points. They are 'from outdoors' in a number of ways: they reflect the Scottish scene; they are the naive formulations of a bureaucrat rather than a research practitioner; and they have germinated in my garden and remain, like it, much in need of pruning.

The Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, unlike its counterpart in England and Wales, has no significant research status or ambitions. We have undertaken research in the past on adult literacy, and are currently engaged in a research project in conjunction with the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education in England and Wales. But we lack both the staff and the library resources which educational institutions can call on as a matter of course, so both our scope and our ambitions are strictly limited.

The questions in this paper arise therefore not from the Institute's own research capacity but rather from my personal contact with three very different kinds of what I am calling 'research'. None of the three could be called major: their time-scale is no more than six months at best; two of them have no connection with a university; and none of them is supported by funding from the major research councils or from the research division of the Scottish Education Department or the Department of Education and Science. Nevertheless, the questions which they raise may help to identify issues, as an outsider's view of people inside a house sometimes casts an unexpected and even revealing light on what is actually happening.

Each of the three research projects represents a different stage along the continuum of research as a major form of problem solving. The first, an investigation of the under-representation of women in computing in Scotland, attempted to ask whether there was a problem in the first place and if so, what it might consist of. Typically of many investigations at such an elementary level, it attracted virtually no funding. It was carried out on behalf of the Joint Working Group on Women and Computing in Scotland, a small voluntary organisation created and sustained by individuals and organisations who believed that ways should be found of redressing the imbalance of women in computing.

In 1985 there was no evidence in Scotland that such a problem as the under-representation of women in computing even existed. Working together with the Joint Working Group on Women and Computers, a volunteer researcher sought to glean preliminary evidence by circulating a questionnaire to all departments of computing science in universities and colleges in Scotland and to all leaders of computer clubs in school. The response provided important indications that a problem existed, both numerically and attitudinally. A number of computer-related courses had no women students, while the majority had a ratio of 5 or 6 males to every female. The attitudes, too, were indicative: one school teacher felt that that problem would be solved if one were to 'encourage girls to be interested in "zapping" aliens in computer video games' (Henning, 1986).

The second research project, a review of current and past research on mature students particularly in Scotland, was based on the recognition that there was some kind of problem and attracted a modest amount of funding to try to formulate its nature more precisely. It was conducted by Dr John Horobin at the University of St Andrews for the statistics branch of the Scottish Education Department. Its remit was to review current and past research on mature students in higher education in the United Kingdom, with particular reference to Scotland; the major variables were to be the career histories and backgrounds of mature students, their motivations and any significant incentives or disincentives which affected their decision to enter full-time or part-time education. Since its results have not yet been published, I shall not, of course, refer to its findings; its inception, however, will provide a useful example of determining the scope of research.

The third research project, 'Advice and Guidance to Individuals', which is a substantial investigation into education and training advice and guidance for adults, is based on the recognition that there is a problem and that something may need to be done about it in the very near future. It is currently being conducted for the MSC by the Unit for Development of Adult Continuing Education and the Scottish Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. As the investigation is still in progress, again, I shall not have findings to report, but the project still provides a useful illustration of the constant need to question fundamental assumptions about the gender compostion of groups of adult learners.

Contributors to the seminar on 'Key Questions in Adult Education Research' were asked to think about the following issues: what is research; the funding of research; methodology; selection of research topics and styles; publication and dissemination of research; effects of research on the practice of adult education; the latent functions of research; expectations of the practitioners of research; and what adult education research is needed, by whom and for what purpose. In what follows, several of these questions are considered. Others are not dealt with, except as they necessarily interact with the ones selected. The whole is intended purely as a stimulus: there are no answers here!

1. WHO FINDS OUT WHAT ABOUT WHOM?

My understanding of the question 'What is research?' is broad, with ragged edges. I am content merely that an investigation should be conducted systematically in order to answer specific questions, and that its conclusions should be supported by evidence. In other words, I would include, as forms of research, serious investigative journalism, careful examination of fieldwork practice, and literature reviews, as well as the kinds of major research activities which are regularly reported in the noticeboard section of THES. My first question therefore is to ask who defines what is research and for what purpose?

In practice, of course, the most important decisions about the nature of research are made by those bodies which fund research. In Scotland the

Scottish Education Department is a major funder of educational research, and its practices in funding are an important factor in determining the selection of research topics and styles. Recently, the SED has established a policy of calling for bids for research which it has previously decided should be carried out, thereby diminishing the possibility of important topics arising from grass-roots experience or of politically awkward questions arising. This practice also results in competition rather than co-operation amongst the bodies which seek research funding, and can lead to the wasteful use of many institutions' resources in preparing numerous bids for research funding.

Over the past two years the department's priorities, for which bids have been sought, have not included adult education. In 1984-85 the 'Register of Current Educational Research Projects' (SED, 1985) listed no projects specifically in adult education, while in 1985-86, one such project appeared (SED, 1986), which attracted .08% of the total SED funding for educational research. For 1986-87 two important topics in adult education in Scotland have appeared as Departmental priorities: mature students in higher education and the training of community education workers. Preliminary work on these issues has not been published, however, and the literature review of mature students in higher education was incomplete at the time that bids in that area were requested. My second question therefore is how could researchers promote continuity in the selection of topics so that systematic investigations in adult education could build up a broad understanding rather tha merely focusing on successive flavours of the month?

Overly narrowly conceived selection of topics for research may run risks of obtaining overly restricted results. The investigation which SIACE and UDACE are currently conducting on educational and vocational guidance, for instance, is required to pay particular attention to the needs of 18-24 year olds for vocational information, advice and guidance. There is ample evidence that more males than females in this age group participate in education and that vocational reasons are cited more often by males than by females as motives for undertaking education. It is thus possible that the results of this investigation could tell us more about male than about female experiences and that any decision made as a result might more be advantageous to males.

Another example of the pitfalls that lie in overly narrowly conceived remits may be found in the discussions that precede determining the remit for the literature review of mature students in Scotland. The Department's original preference was for a study which focused solely on mature students in full-time higher education. Such a study would, of course, have excluded the majority of mature students, whereas the study as finally agreed was able to report on the full range of mature students' formal study regardless of the mode in which it was undertaken. My third question therefore is how far should researchers attempt to widen the remit of investigations which are so narrowly focused that they may seriously affect the value of the outcome?

2. WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO?

There seem to be significant gaps and anomalies in our present understanding of the development of adult and continuing education. Three obvious areas in which adult education research is needed are open learning, single-sex learning and education and training choices; there are other important gaps as well.

In the first place, open or distance learning badly needs to be investigated in proportion to its current widespread development. In particular, the Open Tech has stimulated the intensive production of a substantial volume of materials, but there is little public evidence that the results have been seriously evaluated. Nor, despite much excellent research in the Open University, is there much evidence that current developers of open learning materials in other institutions take adequate account of such findings.

Secondly, there appears to be a major gap in gender-based educational research as a whole; in particular, the experience of those women who undertake education and training courses specifically for women does not appear to have been comprehensively studied. As is happening with distance education, there have been many new developments in provision in this area of adult learning, but the results of substantial investigations into single sex learning - if they are taking place - have not been widely publicised.

Thirdly, I am not aware of much substantial research in Britain on the crucial choices which adults make immediately before they start and after they complete formal education either full time or part time. For example, in 1986 in Scotland, a great deal of attention is being given to implementing the SCOTVEC National Certificate, which has re-organised all of non-advanced further education on a modular basis. Many adults are deciding to take this new route to formal education, yet so far there has been no substantial investigation into their motivations, their learning experiences, the barriers to their learning, and the outcome of their studies.

Important questions can also be asked about the interaction between economic and educational experiences, such as the impact of unemployment and the effects of different fee and grant levels and structures. The Scottish investigation into the representation of women in computing (Henning, 1986), for instance, supported by implication other findings that women are being increasingly disadvantaged by the particular ways in which the new technologies are introduced (Gerver, 1986). There is ample scope here for a large scale study of the interaction of the educational and economic factors at work in the squeezing out of women in the new hierarchies of computing and management in information technology.

Further gaps are created by research that investigates only experience in particular kinds of institutions. Nearly all of the studies cited in the literature review of mature students in Scotland investigated students in one particular kind of institution rather than attempting to compare the situations of students in different learning contexts. In general, there often appears to be a particularly wide gulf between the research findings of the needs of mature students in the Open University and those in the rest of the country.

Meanwhile, there are anomalies within current findings that cry out for further investigation. For example, university participation rates in Scotland are 20% above the average for England and Wales while in the North of England they are 21% below (Fulton, 1982), although the social class mix of Scotland and the North of England is very similar. What are the precise terms of this anomaly and what factors might be implicated in it? Why does the proportion of mature students vary so greatly at Scottish universities, ranging from nearly 19% at Stirling to under 3% at Edinburgh (Hamilton and Bell, 1983)? In broadcasting, why is it that certain educational programmes stimulate an often unexpectedly high request for back-up material, whereas others do not have any measurable outcome? The question then arises of what other anomalies, or unusual patterns, might throw important light on our understanding of educational experience?

CONCLUSION

All of these suggestions that I have been making here are 'outside' ones, in the sense that they deal with questions that lie outside the mainstream of research into adult education or they cross the boundaries that usually restrict investigations to Scotland or, much more often, to England and Wales. It may be that their marginality is a source of strength, in that a view from the outside sometimes throws unexpected light on interiors. Open University research on student support, for instance, may illuminate not only the limitations of purely distance learning but also the unnecessary restrictions of many practices in conventional higher education. An investigation of why women choose 'women-only' courses may help us to see more clearly the interaction amongst tutors and students generally as well as providing important evidence about the factors that women themselves perceive as significant in their lives.

What we now need - as some researchers are already recognising - is a widening of the concept of research into the education of adults. Increasingly, there are times when snapshots may be of more value than three-year carefully composed portraits of particular situations; students' metaphors and accounts of their experiences may provide more valuable indicators of the reality of learning experiences than more precisely quantifiable data. One student at a college in Scotland, for instance, encapsulated both the difficulties and the joy that she felt for her educational experiences in a way that no amassing of data could ever communicate:

> I have been at college for two and a half months now and I have never been so busy and contented in my life ... I find that I am able to keep up very well ... But it's not all quite easy. I am the only student who hasn't studies accounts before, so I really have to work at it ... However, I would like to think I will be able to come back after the exams and carry on forever (cited in Hart, 1986).

One final parting thought. Does there really have to be a window between SCUTREA and all the rest of us who are also interested in research into the education of adults? Adults in Scotland are overflowing as mature students into school and further education colleges, as well as into central institutions, colleges of education and some universities. And, despite lack of encouragement from central government funding, some forms of informal adult education are developing and changing in illuminating ways. Is there an argument for opening the french window and letting us all walk through to speak with each other directly? Should SCUTREA cease to be a forum primarily for the universities and become instead a place of meeting for all those who are interested in research into the education of adults?

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SOME ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

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The title to which I was invited to address this article was *"KEY ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH."* It strikes me that whether or not the issues are key ones will be very much a matter of opinion and consequently I have concentrated on identifying some issues, which, if not key ones, are at least worthy of discussion. They are issues which seem to arise from the way in which research is perceived as an activity.

Marten Shipman in his book *"EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: PRINCIPLES, POLICIES & PRACTICES"* (1) makes the following observation;

> *" Five closely related developments lie behind the educational research enterprise in the late 1980's. First, it has become an established part of the education service. Second, it has attained some independence from the human sciences that controlled it in the 1960's. Third, it has nevertheless been disturbed by the disputes over the status of knowledge within those sciences. Fourth, educational research has been moved out of academia to become part of wider professional activity involving collaborative and school-based activity, with consequent problems of status. Fifth, research designed to produce accounts of the meanings of situations from those investigated, has uncovered the assumptions behind earlier research of a quantitive, top-down design and shown that it was in practice producing a white, anglo saxon, male view of the educational world."*

Shipman is, of course, concerned primarily with the school sector but it is interesting to reflect on how far his assertions are also true of research in adult education. If they are true, and I admit that this may be questionable, then it may be useful to speculate on where research might go next. This paper seeks to explore some of the issues which arise from such speculation and, in the spirit of the discussion document that it is, seeks to raise questions rather than provide answers. It does not attempt to identify suitable topics for research projects nor to parade possible sources of funding. It is concerned more with the ethos which informs research effort in adult education.

What is research?

It seems sensible to begin by trying to identify what is understood by the term 'research'. In the introduction to their book (2), "*CHANGING APPROACHES TO STUDYING ADULT EDUCATION*", Long, Heimstra et al. cite three definitions of research methods. They are as follows;

> " ***Experimental*** *research is based on a design that is primarily used to test hypotheses concerned with cause and effect, or a design that includes control groups, randomization procedures, and manipulation of independent variables to control pertinent factors as much as possible. Such variables are quantitatively described.*
>
> ***Descriptive*** *research is based on designs that require survey and descriptive activity to establish the status of the selected phenomenon or to assess the characteristics of a population. Such activity usually focusses on people, vital facts about their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour.*
>
> ***Historical*** *research is based on critical investigation of events, developments and experiences of the past, the careful weighing of evidence of the validity of information sources, and the interpretation of evidence."*

It would be unfair to suggest that in identifying these three approaches to research the authors are claiming to be definitive. They make no such claim. I quote the text here only so that I can take it as a starting point for a brief discussion about the nature of research in adult education.

The way in which research methods have been typified above can have the effect of marginalising certain kinds of legitimate research activity. It appears as though the only possible or worthwhile research must fall into one of the above categories. But it would be difficult to accommodate, say, a piece of philosophical research into the above framework; the sort of research which set out to identify and analyse salient concepts relating to all or to a particular aspect of adult education would sit uneasily in this typology.

Similarly, evaluative research does not fit comfortably in any of the three categories. Research which attempts to establish the value of a particular activity is not seen as 'experimental' or 'historical' and it is surely something more than 'descriptive'.

One can go on. Comparative research should rise above the merely descriptive and that research which sets out, often without a clearly expressed hypothesis, to analyse and explain a particular phenomenon in a spirit of honest enquiry, would find no room within this scheme of things.

In attempting to draw the parameters around what can be included in a definition of research I am tending to be inclusive rather than exclusive. For the purpose of this paper at least we should be prepared to consider any form of enquiry which is recognised by the participants or by others as research. If we are to try to identify issues which affect adult education research then it seems sensible to keep our working definition as flexible as possible.

Research methods.

Typologies like the one above can be seductive in suggesting that research methods are all known and finite in number; the researcher need only go to the appropriate resource, choose a preferred method, and the research project will be satisfactory. Such an approach can be conservative and constraining. If one were to try to think of a way to ensure that approaches to research remained static and sterile, all one would need to do would be to continue to use well-tried and tested research methods.

It seems that if the research effort in adult education is to develop then there is a case for a more creative approach to the design of research procedures. It may be important to work from a base of knowledge of existing research methods but the suggestion is that this should be a starting point for developing new methods rather than a quarry to be mined for suitable approaches.

It may be better to think of research procedures as ad hoc. They are designed for a particular piece of research and when that research is complete their usefulness is over. Adopting this perspective on research methods would encourage researchers, research students and their supervisors to adopt a more innovative approach to their task. It would no longer be a question of going to the library to find the appropriate method but more a question of asking some fairly fundamental questions about what one is trying to achieve, the nature of evidence, and the most effective ways of collecting that evidence in order to ensure that any conclusions are taken seriously. One of the major benefits of involvement in research is that it promotes thought and argument which can, in itself, be of value, irrespective of research findings.

I am aware that in accepting this approach there is the danger that one might find oneself continuously reinventing the wheel. But is this really so bad?. At least it will be a tailor-made and purpose built wheel.

I must be careful not to appear to be dismissing all established and well documented research methods. My intention here is to do no more than warn against a complacent approach which leads us back to the same old comfortable procedures and to suggest a way in which those involved might encourage the qualitative development of research in adult education..

All research methods have their limitations and scrupulous researchers will acknowledge these in writing up their reports. In an article in Convergence as long ago as 1975 Budd Hall (3)outlined the shortcomings of many social science research methods and, in particular, listed the problems of the survey method as follows;

> " *1. The survey research approach oversimplified social reality and was therefore inaccurate....*
> *2. Survey research was often alienating, dominating, or oppressive in character....*
> *3. Survey research did not provide easy links to possible subsequent action....*

4. *Survey research methods were not consistent with the principles of adult education."*

Whilst these worries were intended to refer only to the survey method it does not take much imagination to see how similar criticisms might be levelled at other approaches to research. The list could be seen as a series of prompts for questions which a potential researcher might ask in relation to any research design.

Methods clearly have to be appropriate to the research in hand but one should acknowledge that they also may have to be appropriate to the researcher (or for that matter the research supervisor). Some people appear to be able to tackle any sort of research but there are others who feel uncomfortable with particular approaches. They may feel insecure and lost when using a more unstructured enquiring approach or feel intimidated by very structured statistical methods. In any event we cannot leave the personality of the researcher out of the equation. A researcher who feels uncomfortable with a particular method is unlikely to make the most of the research task.

There may be a lesson here for those who supervise research students, especially those who have to undertake a small scale project as part of a taught course. In attempting to find a fit between researcher and research project it is important that supervisors do not project their own anxieties onto students and, maybe, constrain what might otherwise be an exciting and imaginative piece of work.

Not only do the needs of researcher require consideration but, when the research focusses on people then they, the researched, also deserve our consideration. Budd Hall has already warned of the potentially alienating and oppressive effect of a survey method. In devising research procedures we must clearly have regard for the rights and expectations of those who may be the subject of the research.

The choice of method can be further informed by giving attention to the question of why individuals do research. It is not too simplistic an answer to suggest that they do it because they want to find out about something or other. This is certainly true of some researchers. Others do it in order to obtain a higher degree and others in an attempt to influence policy or practice. There may even be those who don't know why they are doing it. However, when the reason for doing the research is known it can often inform the choice of method. Research which seeks to influence policy may require a different approach to that which is done to satisfy curiosity and research institutions may demand a different approach from community groups. Ultimately, the context in which the research is being done will constrain what is possible.

There may be occasions when one wishes to set out on an academic enquiry without knowing the parameters within which one might end up working and without knowing what methods will ultimately be used. One might simply decide upon a direction for an enquiry and develop methods and approaches as the research progresses. There is nothing wrong with taking this line; it is often the way in which we find things out in our everyday lives. But such an open ended approach can only be afforded by those with time and resources to spare.

Selection of research topics.

There are questions around the way in which the procedures which are used to initiate research by their nature restrict the sort of research which is done. Higher degree students, for instance, have to satisfactorily negotiate their way through an array of selection procedures. The possibilities for innovative research work in this context can be limited.

Being accepted as a research student usually means submitting a carefully worked out proposal which identifies the parameters of the research and includes details of the methods to be used. Whether or not a proposal is accepted depends on convincing a selection board that the project can be completed in a specified time by the applicant. It should be remembered that the members of the board may themselves have their own preferences and predilections concerning topic and method. Such institutional constraints restrict the possible approaches to research activity. It seems important to ensure that research effort is not being unduly influenced by what are often no more than administratively convenient procedures.

A similar restriction can arise from the ability or otherwise of the award-giving institution to find a member of staff who feels competent to supervise the research. This constraint necessarily precludes research into many activities which are a part of adult education but not part of University activity. One thinks of curricular research in all those creative subjects which are part and parcel of adult education provision yet not taught in British Universities. It is not long ago that one would have been hard pressed to find anyone in the university sector capable of supervising literacy research.

Again I must not overstate the case. Many University Departments of Adult Education do accommodate research topics which are outside the immediate expertise of their staff. In such cases it is expertise in the doing of research which is the pre-eminent concern. But there is a worry that potential research students simply do not apply because they feel that the procedures and formalities and the known areas of interest of the staff militate against their acceptance. There may be a case for inviting experienced professionals from outside the University to participate in the supervision and even the selection of research projects.

Funded research can be similarly constrained. Any proposals will have to coincide with the interests of research funding bodies and the extent of the research, the methods to be used, and often the form in which the results will be disseminated, must be specified from the outset. Sensibly, research funding agencies do not wish to waste their money on ill conceived projects. But in being cautious they may reject proposals which, though vague in initial outline, could be seminal in their results.

The dissemination of research.

A consideration of the ways in which adult education research is disseminated and the relationship between research and practice raises important questions. One can, for the sake of clarity, think of research on two levels, the macro and the micro. Macro-research is concerned with philosophical and ideological issues, with the purposes and effects of adult education, with the policy and organisation of adult education and with the belief systems which inform much practice. Micro-research is concerned with what goes on in the classroom or at the point of learning. It is concerned with curricular issues, with approaches to teaching and learning, and with relationships in educational settings. One would expect this level of research to be informed by the macro-level but this is not always the case.

Research and writing at the macro-level is often published and read by those with a professional or academic interest in the wider issues of adult education. Such work rarely impinges on the consciousness of the part-time teacher unless that teacher has been involved in some sort of training course above, say, Stage II. There are questions about how far such writing can, in itself, change attitudes or change the direction or emphasis of adult education procedures.

Similar questions attend upon the publication of micro-research though here, because the focus is nearer to the immediate experience of the individual tutor, there is more likelihood that it will find an audience.

The extent to which the publication of either kind of research can change or influence policies or behaviour is problematic. Torsten Husén has identified two ways in which research can influence policy. These he calls the "enlightenment" or "percolation" model and the "political" model. In the first instance research influences policy indirectly by entering into the consciousness of those involved in policy decision making. Terms of reference and conceptual models are used which have their origins, unbeknown to those involved, in research activity. The second model refers to those occasions when political decision makers use research findings to justify their position, to strengthen their argument, or even to obfuscate an issue in a welter of evidence. Husén concludes (4);

> *" From the above analysis we conclude that the relationship between policy and research is much more diffuse and hard to pinpoint than hitherto conceived.*

> *Scholarship in general, and in some instances particular programs of projects of research, contribute to putting certain issues on the agenda of public debate and to inspiring demands for political action. Research, not least through critical analysis, is an instrument of generating ideas more than specific "facts" or general "knowledge". In some instances research contributes to the reinterpretation of an issue by drawing attention to aspects or problems which have gone unnoticed. It also tends to affect the belief systems among the general public."*

Published articles or books relating to both micro-research and macro-research may provoke thought and even reaction but the extent to which they alter the nature of adult education activity is unquantifiable. The results of funded research may succeed in changing policy if they coincide with the interests of the funding agencies which in turn can influence policy. If they do not so coincide there is no shortage of tried and imaginative procedures for avoiding implementing research recommendations. There are questions about what researchers can or should do if their findings are suppressed by funding agencies.

Participatory approaches to research can go some way to overcoming these problems. Where the research problem is identified by those involved in an activity, the research methods worked out by or in conjunction with them, and the research results owned by them, there is more chance that they will act upon those results; they will have a greater interest in doing so than if these result had been published by some remote research institution.(5) Budd Hall argues strongly in favour of this approach in the article already mentioned.

Conclusion.

The main thrust of this paper has been to do with the way in which research activity is perceived by researchers, adult educators and policy makers, and the way in which this perception might influence the direction and nature of future work. It has attempted to identify some of the constraints within which researchers have to work but, more importantly, it has sought to identify those constraints which we may be able to do something about.

A more innovatory approach to the design of research procedures has been advocated and it has been suggested that research methods may best be perceived as being ad hoc. Their appropriateness should be seen as relating as much to the researcher and the researched as to the research topic. It has further been suggested that the very procedures we adopt to recruit and supervise research students may be limiting the range of topics and approaches which are being researched.

It has been argued that we should rely less on old methodologies, which are often borrowed from other disciplines, if we are to improve the quality and contribute to the development of the research effort. More thought needs to go into finding methods of disseminating research findings so that they can begin to influence practice and contribute to thought and argument about adult education. There is an endorsement of the view that participatory methods may provide the best chance of effecting change through research.

Before finishing it is worth suggesting that more effort goes into the demystification of research. There is a great mystique which surrounds the whole business of research. There are some people who could contribute a great deal who find this alienating. The situation is not helped by the way in which research reports are sanitized to the extent that they give no real clue as to the doubts, false starts, and uncertainties which accompany any research activity. Resort to jargon is another well understood alienating factor. Would it not be a good idea to publish a book containing first person accounts of the doing of research in adult education. These would identify the by no means simple and straightforward progress of a piece of research alongside an account of the procedural and emotional upsets experienced by the researcher. They would provide insights into what it feels like to get stuck in the middle of writing up or to suddenly become aware of the inadequacies of some data. Such publications exist in other areas of educational research. Robert G. Burgess has edited ten case studies of the research process in educational settings. The studies provide valuable and reassuring insights into the subjective experiences of researchers. The book claims that (6);

> " *...first person accounts that combine together discussions of the research process with research*

> *technique can help us to advance our knowledge of research practice."*

and goes on to explain (7);

> *" For social scientists have been relatively slow to provide public accounts of their own educational experiences whilst doing research. Yet as anyone who hangs around the fringe of conference bars and research seminars knows, there is a wealth of academic gossip about the false starts and faux pas that are part of the everyday world of the social researcher.*
>
> *It is only in the last decade that social researchers in Britain have begun to raise questions about what constitutes 'doing research', for social and educational research has been surrounded by a conspiracy of silence (at least in public and printed form)."*

It could be that an adult education publication in this vein would succeed in interesting many more people in becoming involved in adult education research.

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KEY ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION: The context

This paper considers some issues in adult education research in English Universities to be used as a basis for discussion. It is written under a general heading of "The Politics of Adult Education Research". Definitions of politics usually refer to power and government. For the benefit of the paper I debated using politics as defined in the Readers Digest Illustrated Dictionary (1984 entry 5a). That is, "the scheming and manoeuvring for power and personal advantage that occurs within a different group". In this particular instance the group refers to academics. However, it seems that the definition needs to include the concept of "policy". In the absence of an appropriate definition I am, therefore, in the paper going to refer to three aspects of politics. They are power, personal advantage and policy.

The notions of research and power are closely related in academic life. For example, a primary function of Universities is the advancement of knowledge which results from research, and is in itself, a basis for power. As Gelpi (1980:19) points out, sometimes the knowledge validated by conventional institutions is the only parameter of success in the social and educational sphere. Thus, that knowledge becomes an instrument among things for social and educational selection.

Support of Gelpi's argument is embodied in the University Grants Committee (UGC) circular letter 4/86 44/52/031 Annex II of 20 May 1986, in which details of financial grants to Universities were contained. The grants were allocated on some sort of research ratings (paragraph 17).

In the circular, Universities and University Departments were publicly labelled as being Above Average, Average and Below Average in terms of these ratings. Research activites or lack of them become associated with the power of financial status, and the power of the resource allocators to decide that status educationally.

The position in American Universities appears to be the same. James McElhinney (1985:215) in an American context, says that in recent years the roles of research in the lives of faculty members has increased greatly in importance. He sees this as part of the process of a university becoming prestigious. That is, to increase the prestige of the university, each academic must obtain research grants and publish findings in refereed journals.

Traditionally, in Britain , adult education and extra-mural provision of University education,[1] seem to have been perceived as one and the same thing. Adult education under this rubric, has, therefore, been included in an assumption that University extra-mural departments are not affected by the research requirement. This could be because University extra-mural work is primarily funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES) not the UGC, and thus not evaluated as are other types of academic endeavour, including the research element. In 1984, Stuart Marriott (1984:118) said,directors of extra-mural departments have been employed as full-time administrators, not to engage in reflection and research.

References in this paper show how recent writers referring to adult education research use the terms extra-mural and adult education interchangeably. For example, Paul Fordham (1978:57) points to the historical omission of research as being part of University adult education.

Marriott's explanation supports that of Elsey (1977:119) who made a statement to the effect that the University establishment accepts that extra-mural departments and their staff will not be as active as other departments in promoting knowledge. Paul Armstrong (June, 1985:13), in his debate regarding power and control of university extra-mural departments, quotes from Annual

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[1] That is, University level classes with open access for local population (see Marriott, 1984).

Reports of the Universities Council on Adult and Continuing Education, to draw attention to the status of adult education in Britain. That is, that "adult education has been too often tolerated rather than whole-heartedly accepted and fostered as a normal and essential part of a University academic role and responsibility".

Increasingly, however, adult and/or continuing education (rather than extra-mural work) is being recognised as an integral part of University education. A Dean of Continuing Education, at Surrey University, for example, has been appointed in 1986. He is an academic from a Department in the Engineering Faculty.

Currently many University Departments of Adult Education[2] have a wider range of roles and activities than hitherto, as the new range of names of such Departments suggest. If, therefore, the status of such departments is to change,it seems to be an inevitability they will have to be, if they are not already, measured as are other university departments, by writing and research productivity. Indeed, Caroline Ellwood (1976:128) and Barry Elsey (1977:119) felt when they wrote, that the future of extra-mural departments would rely on their being judged in such a way.

The UGC circular letter 4/86 44/52/031 Annex II dated 20 May 1986 makes clear that "responsibility for deciding how the grant should be spent continues to rest with institutions". Individual universities can be expected in times of financial stringency to exercise contingency power for resources allocation. That is, in this case, where UGC funds are affected no resources unless conditions of research activity are forthcoming, and vice versa.

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

Research is defined in many ways. Sharan Merriam and Edwin Simpson (1984:2) summarize conceptualisations of research, and define it as "a systematic process by which we know more about something than we did before engaging in the process". This definition has problems in terms of interpretation, however, especially in academic life. It is not good enough to know something new ourselves. Rather, we have to advertise in some way, what we know and how we found it out.

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[2] Unless referring to a quote or a specific study I will refer to University Departments of Adult Education to include all the combinations of titles of departments involved in the academic study of the education of adults, including extra mural studies.

Sommer and Sommer (1980:3) define research as "careful, patient and methodical inquiry done according to certain rules". The "rules" may include how the power structure interprets research. This may not be in agreement with the interpretation of individual staff. Elsey (1977:120) found that the staff at Nottingham that responded to his survey on research, interpreted research as "writings" about various teaching and organisational practices. The UGC circular letter of 20 May 1986 refers explicitly to "externally" funded research. These represent two extremes. If the policy of Universities is to primarily define research in terms of that which is externally funded, it can be concluded that individuals involved in such research will have a personal advantage over other academics in terms of career prospects and development.

SELECTING RESEARCH TOPICS

Academic staff in Departments of Adult Education are often, if not always, those drawn from other academic disciplines. In the discussion of the politics of research in adult education this is a factor that cannot be ignored.

Sommer and Sommer (1980:5) believe that academic disciplines cannot be kept separate. McIntosh (1982:163) also pointed out that lifelong education has its basis in many disciplines, accepting the multi-disciplinary nature of adult education.

There is an increasing trend however, to address the debate about the definition of adult education as an academic discipline in its own right. James McElhinney (1985:216) says that adult education is ancient in practice but young as a field of systematic study. He believes that adult education builds on the research of other social, behavioural, and educational fields.

Barry Bright (1986:22), however, argues that while adult education ignores the nature of the knowledge produced by its source disciplines, such as psychology, it has not successfully delineated itself into a theoretically distinct subject of study from those source disciplines. Bright is echoing the contention of Boyd and Apps (1980) when they express the view that students of adult education have borrowed indiscriminately from other disciplines. The result is that scholarly literature is inadequately integrated and poorly linked with practice. Boyd and Apps (1980:10) suggest a three-dimensional model of adult education, on which to base goals for practice. This model is severely criticized by Robert Carlson (1980:.174-184) in the same publication.

There are implications in these arguments for the selection of academic areas from which to choose research topics, which require more time and effort than is appropriate in this paper. I will instead consider in turn some key factors which may result from these issues.

(i) Research into What?

Bright (1986:20) puts up a convincing case for questioning the assumption that at this time there is a distinct theoretical discipline of adult education. Rather he puts forward a case for adult education as a practical orientation. If Bright's contention is accepted, then the choice of academic areas of research become clear. Either they are drawn from the intrinsic independent disciplines such as psychology, sociology, history and philosophy OR the research can address itself to the task of reconceptualizing and redefining adult education in terms of the epistemological content and methods that delineate it (Bright 1986:19). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:25) say that there is an urgent need for the development of a body of research and theory unique to adult education.

(ii) Subject Specialist or Adult Education Generalist?

Bright (1986) and Boyd and Apps (1980), among others, believe that the lack of theoretical knoweldge in adult education sufficiently distinct from its source disciplines, threatens academic standards on the one hand, and questions the validity of its academic existence on the other. This leaves the specialist in an epistemological limbo of divided loyalties and frustrated intellectual concerns (Bright 1986:22) - an academic specialist being expected to function as a generalist.

It follows from this argument that subject specialists from other disciplines may make contributions from their research in subject areas, to adult education practice. Elsey (1977:22) cites examples of these. It also follows that in doing so the staff may incur certain penalties.

These could include lack of opportunity for staff development support. For example, no money in an "education" department to attend conferences etc, to keep updated in the other subject specialism.

For staff involved in extra mural work (RB staff)[3], this is a particularly important issue, when such staff are publicly accountable on behalf of the provision of that subject specialism in a range of adult education activities. Armstrong (1985:17) has shown, for example, how Arts subjects have consistently dominated the Tables for the most popular subjects in University Extra-Mural Courses from 1976-83.

Surrey is currently (Spring-Winter 1986) being inspected by the Department of Education (DES) Inspectorate. So far not once have I been asked by the Inspectorate about my research and publications in adult education (probably just as well) and as far as I know none of my colleagues have either. The report of the Inspectorate which is published and publicly available does not address itself to that, but, as to how the extra-mural subject specialism has been developed theoretically and practically.

A Department and University may benefit from extra-mural work in the continuing allocation of the Department of Education and Science Responsible Body grant, particularly if it additionally has full time equivalent student (FTE) value. The DES grants at present contribute to RB teaching costs, but individual staff do not benefit financially as do staff with research contracts the money for which can be used to recruit research/secretarial/administrative help. Another penalty for RB staff is, therefore, that when a heavy administrative/clerical load ensures a competition with academic research time, doing one may be at the expense of the other. The quality of both may then be diluted.

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[3] Universities receiving direct government grants toward the provision of extra-mural classes, are designated by Government Regularities as "responsible bodies" for this task. These courses, so funded are publicly accountable and are vetted by government appointed inspectors (HMIs).

Research into a subject specialism may involve the adult educationalist to be in competition with other University departments specializing in the same subject area. A sociologist in a Department of Adult Education may be competing with academics in the same field, but in another Department - a sort of academic onlooker. Part-time degrees, which may have been in the past the province of Departments of Adult Education in times of financial stringency and falling birth rates, become a potential source of regular and additional income for all University provision. It is likely that a Department in which the subject specialism is based, becomes the sponsoring unit for such degrees, reducing the opportunity organisationally for the adult educationalist to develop her academic expertise, including research in the specialist subject area.

Elsey (1977:119-127) discusses the problems of extra-mural staff and research. He said (1977:119) that the struggle for scarce resources and the restrictions on career mobility will demand of such staff, clear evidence of living up to the ideal of advancing knowledge by research. Yet while RB work remains in its present form, RB funded staff will always have a dual role as an adult educationalist and "other" subject specialist.

It may be, for those who wish to stay with a subject specialism other than adult education, would be in a better position professionally, based in the subject Department. This presumes that one exists. However, in a more rigid framework, this may act as a deterrent to the development of the subject specialism in the education of adults, and it still would not solve the problem of the different contextual issues of extra-mural work.

The University Grants Committee differentiates between academic disciplines of individual members of staff and the professional study of the education of adults. The letter from the UGC Chairman, to the secretary of the Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education (13 June 1986) refers to research considered by the UGC as being discrete pieces of unconnected research by individuals, rather than a body of "adult education" research.

The Department of Education and Science does not seem to have such a clear-cut distinction. In the last two years the DES has allocated money for small-scale research studies.

It is interesting that whatever the philosophy on which this new DES funding formula for University Innovative projects is, (and it does list criteria), 12 out of 23 of the 1985/86 sponsored projects involved computers and technology. Barry Bright and his argument that adult education is a practice rather than an academic discipline seems to be supported here.

(iii) Advantages of choosing Adult Education research

It seems an obvious advantage, whatever the aforementioned problems inherent in such a venture, for an academic employed in a University Department of Adult Education to plan, execute and contribute in ANY way, research into adult education. Alternatively for subject specialists to combine the two.

The advantage may be seen in several ways. It could reduce the fragmented academic approaches that may result from working as one of a multi-disciplinary group. To that extent, accord those in adult education with a professional identity. As Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:31) point out "ultimately the credibility and vitality of any profession rests on the development and dissemination of a specialized body of theory and technique". Hopefully, in time, the subject specialism will be adult education.

More Departments of Adult Education are now offering some form of certification or post-graduate degrees in Adult Education. Staff involved in this work may much more identify with being an adult education specialist (an idea for research here). When students as part of these courses are involved in research projects, they look to academic advisors for the selection and supervision of research topics. There must be, by definition, an expectation that staff are adult education specialists. In the case of students doing research for dissertations I believe there are some essential features in making the choice. The features can be considered to be relevant and appropriate to staff employed in Departments of

Adult Education. They are;

1. an interest in the topic for research

2. a choice of context area for research, in which the student can foresee to be of advantage in some way, either in career or personal prospects. For example, in the latter case, developing an aspect of her job

3. an understanding that the research will also make a contribution to the general theoretical framework, for example, curriculum development, in which it is set.

Some recent graduates from Surrey have chosen as their topics for research work (in their theoretical context) "Pre-retirement Education" (Adult Education) (Southgate, 1984), and "Moral Education as a Separate Academic Discipline in basic nurse training" (Young Adults) (Rodmell, 1985).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As Sommer and Sommer (1980:4) point out, it is the task of the researcher to set priorities for the questions to be asked, as well as to identify the best methods to be used.
Historically the debate in deciding the choice of research method has reflected the view that either research is empirically/scientifically based, or it is not research.

However, if the 1986 American Adult Education Research Conference (AERC:1986) is indicative of academically acceptable research methods, then the debate of quantitative versus qualitative methods has abated, since both types were represented in the papers. Having said that, Matkin (1980-138) after a survey of the 20 volumes of Adult Education (USA) from 1950-1979, found that articles devoted to empirical research increased over that time from 8.2% to over 44% of the total. This was a total reversal of the trends of the first five years of publication.

Matkin (1980:142) argues against adult education being dominated by quantitative research methods. He believesthat adult education is a field characterised by self-examination, and it would want to avoid the charge of triviality and exclusion of the interpretative role. In other words, he thinks that qualitative research is essential when the subjects of research are human.

Whatever method is used will depend on the aim and rationale for the research. As Ruddock (1981:112) points out, a positivist measurement of factors, statistical processing and validations of hypotheses can yield important data, but cannot understand the dynamic social processes, underlying, for example, research into role analysis.

The fundamental difference between the two groups of methods are that one, the quantitative group, relies on external, quantifiable, replicable data, whilst the other, the qualitative group relies on subjective, internal, interpretative data (Cohen and Mannion 1980:28). In considering the politics of research it is difficult in the absence of a range of major written up research projects to assess whether one or another method carries the most "power". In the immediate past, if not, as an ongoing exercise, numbers of participants and potential participants, probably keep in public view, demand for adult education provision. Quantitative methods are essential here. Essential too are descriptive quantitative methods, as in the statistics of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (1982), and Cross (1981), illustrating, for example, information on available opportunities for adult education, barriers to access, and the like. Allied to this needs to be some systematic research into precisely WHAT is being done, in University Departments of Adult Education to provide some sort of data for evaluation of provision.

Quantitative statistics cannot alone provide the theoretical framework for adult education. Conceptual studies are of primary interest here, particularly those based in philosophy and linguistics. (Merriam and Simpson, 1984:85). What for instance, is adult education; research; adult development? Some of the most influential studies of adult education are in this area of research. The work on andragogy is one example.

There is no reason why methods cannot be combined in one piece of research, say a survey, followed by in depth interviews of a selected sample. There are now some excellent books to help in a choice of methods for research. These include ones by Sommer and Sommer (1980), Cohen and Mannion (1980), Merriam and Simpson (1984), and Bogdan and Biklen (1982).

In discussing personal advantages it may not be the research method which decides that, but whether the research is disseminated to as wide an audience as possible.

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

The outlets for publication and dissemination of research in adult education are endless but in England we seem to be less forthcoming than in the United States of America (USA). Graduate research students as a matter of course are encouraged to submit their research to conferences and for publication. During a recent visit to the USA, I attended two conferences concerned with adult education research.

These were the North American (American and Canadian) Adult Education Research Conference (AERC, 1986) and the National Conference on the Adult Learner (Columbia, South Carolina, 1986). At both of them students as well as academic staff, were presenting details of their research, some of it on a fairly small scale Case Study type.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982, 27-29) discuss various forums for which there is encouragement of the production and dissemination of new knowledge. Similarly David Jones (1986, 5-10) has written an excellent and comprehensive list of periodicals in Britain wishing to publish articles on Adult and Continuing Education.

More Departments could publish their own work. When I first came into academic life, I was under the impression (I believe, in retrospect, grossly mistaken) that the only outlets for publication "should" be refereed journals, high status publishers (i.e. Oxford University Press) and the like. It has taken me some time therefore, to even volunteer a paper such as this, because the task appeared to be too daunting.

Without appearing to be patronising I have to say that just being involved with the members of Standing Conference for University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) has helped me tremendously in not only learning an enormous amount, but in acquiring the confidence to participate in an exchange of ideas, putting my own to the test.

SOME FUNCTIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

Fortune (1985:70) states that often educators give lip service to the role of research in theory, but actually regard it as lending status to what they are already doing. He goes further to say of a lay view of research, that when results agree with a person's bias, it is divine revelation. When results conflict, it is poorly done and inappropriate.

Some functions of adult education research have already been alluded to. These include contributions to the status of the University, from the financial and "public-acceptability" viewpoints; improving career prospects and mobility; encouraging a sense of professional identity/credibility; dissemination of knowledge; developing an appropriate conceptual theoretical framework on which it bases the practice of adult education etc. McElhinney (1985:215-221) examines multiple legitimate uses of research processes in adult education.

Fortune (1985:69) looks at some latent functions of research, some of which are politically motivated. He says that administrators for example, come to believe that research can best serve to justify their actions. Similarly legislators see research as a general purpose crystal ball and a tool for in-fighting.

WHAT ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH IS NEEDED?

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:26) draw attention to the fact that several attempts have been made to identify research priorities in adult education, but, they say, any such judgements are a matter of preference and opinion. They suggest that no problem or topic has been overstudied.

Given the most widely held assumptions about adult learners, conditions to facilitate learning have not been systematically studied and written up. At present little is known about the skills of lifelong learning nor how to develop these skills (Cropley 1980:210). McIntosh (1982:162) suggests some sort of evaluation impact of adult education as a means of intervention in a person's life. Some aetiological studies may be of interest here in assessing whether the experience of adult education has indeed made any impact on that person's life.

Personally, I have found little work on hermaneutics, but what I have (Chene 1985, 76-81) has been invaluable in interpreting literature and helping students to develop a critical analysis of what they read.

Cropley (1982:210-211) suggests a number of general issues to which adult education research could be addressed. These include vocational issues.

Nearly all of adult education literature talks about its function in a changing social and technological environment. Yet few with the exception of Botkin (1979), consider this in detail. Innovative learning for the future, brings into question the whole basis on which adult learning is currently based (McIntosh, 1986:177). An investigation of the "so-what" syndrome can be considered. That is, having identified problems/issues etc so....what are the future possibilities? This issue can be examined theoretically and practically .

Paul Fordham (1978: 60) identified the need for comparative and international studies in adult education. The British and North American Faculty Exchange sponsored by The Commission of Professors of The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education and SCRUTREA, between 1984 and 1986, has highlighted this need.

Research results may benefit anyone involved in education - administrators, academics, governmental bodies, teachers, students. Research may act to justify practice as Fortune (1985:70) suggests. It may also help to throw new light on any of the topics researched. In light of recent University cuts, it can also show that adult educators are taking their academic role seriously. This seems, as has already been suggested, essential, if adult education is to survive in a University setting.

EXPECTATIONS OF PRACTITIONERS OF RESEARCH

These I will list from the reading. They include, time, money, recognition of its value, administration and secretarial support, Departmental encouragement (including the staff development programmes which adult educationalists recommend for all others); development of professional and personal competence. Matkin's article (1980) looks at the ideals.

RESEARCH FUNDING

Universities often have their own sources of support for research. Externally there are the Research Councils, the British Council, the Department of Education and Science and the Nuffield Foundation among others. As far as I know all sources of funding publish their own guidelines for research.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to consider some issues in adult education research in Universities, in the framework of "the Politics" of such research.

Three aspects of politics are referred to and conclusions are drawn under these headings:

1. Power

University research is part of a power struggle to gain funds and status at State, national, institutional and individual level.

Adult Education Departments may have lower status in a University because of ill-defined aims, and lack of theoretical framework on which to base their work.

Departments concerned primarily with extra-mural work, will have less power in the University "hierarchy" in terms of the University Grants Committee's interpretation of research.

2. Policy

It is the general policy of decision making groups to base decisions on research activity which is "externally" funded.

University Adult Education Departments are currently being evaluated on the same criteria, particularly in relation to external funding of research, as any other Department in a University.

Adult and continuing education is increasingly being seen as an academic study in its own right. This highlights the need for conceptual studies to develop an appropriate theoretical framework for an academic discipline.

The University Grants Committee which allocates financial grants to Universities does not recognize subject specialist research, as being that of adult education.

Adult education and extra-mural work are being identified separately, for consideration of research opportunities, outlets, and evaluation.

Some work, for example, staff development programmes and part-time degrees, which may have historically been part of the work of Adult Education, is now being considered to be a University-wide responsibility. Research areas are, therefore, being competed for "internally".

It may help staff in Departments of Adult Education if more Departments published their own research and aided staff in disseminating information.

Degrees and certificates in Adult Education with research elements may help adult education staff to clarify some of the major research gaps and issues.

RB staff and the University Departments in which they are employed either need to establish separate rules governing their status in adult education, or make clear, what it is in the prevailing one. Little seems to have been written on this (or researched!).

3. Personal Advantages

Academics following a research route are more likely to be considered for promotion, than those who do not.

RB staff need to link research of other subject specialisms with adult education to avoid being penalised.

Adult education staff need to publish/disseminate the information they gain, whatever it is, and by whatever route.

The need for adult education research appears to be open- ended. If more is to be done, we need address ourselves to HOW, administratively, organisationally and not least ACADEMICALLY.

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University Grants Committee letter dated 13 June 1986 from the Chairman, Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer FRS to W. Forster Esq. MA, Secretary, Universities Council for Adult and Continuing Education

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

The discussion group at the Conference was decided by random computer selection and consisted of a cross-section of participants. That is, Kosaku Miyasaka (Japan), Hal Beder (USA), Colin Titmus (Leeds), Tim Steward (Edinburgh), Ted Thomas (Bristol), Nick Small (OU), Alan Rogers (Commonwealth Institute), Veronica McGiveney (NIACE) and Joyce Tanner (USA).

The group divided into two sub-groups. One of these considered the case for adult education as an academic discipline, the other group put forward a case against. Each considered the political dimension of the arguments. The total group then reformed to discuss the findings.

The international dimension became clear almost at once. Kosaku Miyasaka said that in Japan the question of scholarship is of primary importance. Joyce Tanner, who is a co-ordinator of an evening community English as a Second Language (ESL) programme, felt that such a debate was irrelevant (my adjective) since adult education is practice not theory based. From the other sub-group Hal Beder also did not support the view that adult education is an academic discipline in itself.

The debate revolved around the aims and purposes of adult education research. One topic was that adult educationalists, as a group are staking a claim for its existence. Whether adult education can be seen as an academic discipline or as a field of study, the research element may affect our status/practice/existence.

Veronica McGiveney felt, and the group agreed, that adult educationalists start from a position of enormous weakness in curricular politics. Tim Steward said that this could be because of its interdisciplinary focus. Colin Titmus believes that one of the strengths of adult education research is its multi-disciplinary orientation. After more discussion it was agreed that it may be that interdisciplinary adult education research may be seen as a model for other subjects for research, especially as there is not a single model for research into adult education.

It was thought that however adult education research is defined, its primary aim and rationale is basically to help people in their social and personal development. Alan Rogers made reference to the non-formal versus formal institutional considerations of this aim. In so far as researchers are concerned Nick Small, suggested, that adult education research is in itself an education process.

Adult education is still clarifying its issues and much of the research with which it is involved is inductive. Ted Thomas said that there is a great deal of research in adult education, but there may be difficulty in finding it.

Everyone thought that there is a major need for research into how best to synthesize that which already exists.

It is interesting to note that although the sub-groups began with conflicting areas of debate, there was a high degree of consensus among them in the general discussion .

POST SCRIPT

I had been assigned as the group "leader" of this Seminar group and had written the above paper as a basis for discussion. However, as I had written it (before the Conference) in the context of English University Adult Education, much of the detail was not relevant to the group members. As I said to the group, I have a personal aversion to people speaking on behalf of others. To that extent each group member made a substantial contribution to the debate. The discussion was not recorded and a short resume such as this cannot do it justice, but it did highlight that a small group of adult educationalists from varying backgrounds and cultures do share common concerns and interests in relation to the politics of adult education research.

KEY ISSUES IN ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH

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In a paper which is primarily designed to be used as an aid for discussion purposes it is not intended that the contents should be either comprehensive in scope or definitive in assertion. It aims to do no more than air some viewpoints on such matters as the nature, purpose and practices of research in the field of adult education.

What is research

Put at its simplest, research is the conduct of an inquiry which may extend a knowledge base and/or may reinterpret and restructure that base. The research may be deemed to be either 'pure' or 'applied' in intention. Pure research emphasises the undertaking of an investigation for its own sake, i.e. the desire to explore a field without there necessarily being any clear goal in sight at the initial stages. Applied research is an enquiry into a topic with the expected outcome of results carrying implications for practice.

However, questions about the nature of research into adult education cannot be dealt with in quite such a straightforwardly simple fashion.

The nature of adult education research

Debate has raged in the interested journals and publications as to what are the parameters of adult education and whether it has the right to label itself an academic discipline. At best it is deemed to be an emerging discipline, and at worst nothing more than a conglomeration of semi-theories culled from other disciplines and applied, imperfectly, to the field of adult education; and evidence cited for these judgements inevitably refers to the perceived lack of research undertaken in the field.

Opinions in the UK and USA in the late '70s and early '80s can be characterized by those of Mee and Boshier.

Graham Mee (1978) considered that if adult education is to be thought of as a distinct area of study then it should possess

> "a distinctly adult-education body of knowledge ... We must become other than mere borrowers from, for example, the psychology of adolescence or the sociology of organisations and develop a substantial research output on the adult learner and the sociology of adult education organisations."

Boshier's (1980) opinion was that

> "Adult educators should continue the traditional practice of examining theories in allied disciplines for conceptualizations that enhance abilities to understand, predict, and control adult education phenomenon but should also place greater emphasis on the development of theory indigenous to adult education."

However, opinion in the mid-'80s seems to have moved from this stance.

Plecas and Sork (1986) decided that given the length of time adult education was appearing to take in gestating into a fully-fledged academic discipline, it was worthwhile analysing the literature to try and establish the reasons for the delay. They concluded that

> " .. two fundamental functions which normally characterize emerging disciplines are not apparent in the adult education literature - cumulative knowledge and theory building. There is no evidence that adult educators have made a concerted effort on any sizable scale to use theory and research arising from adult education and other relevant literature as building blocks in the creation of consolidated theoretical models."

However, K.H. Lawson (1985) points out that given the nature of education and of adult education which is not

> "an objective self-evident unitary reality,"

it is inevitable that researchers have to take an entirely pragmatic approach.

Charnley (1984) pointed out that it was unusual in the adult education field to read a thesis or research paper

> "which is limited, either in content or relevance, to a single

specialist issue within a rigidly defined discipline."

Purposes

The 'why' or 'for what purpose is the research being undertaken' is a prime question posed by a field which prides itself on practice above all other matters. Rachal (1986) offers three criteria for assessing adult education research questions: applications to practice; contribution to understanding; and universality, i.e. there are implications which extend beyond the people or phenomena being observed and studied. In terms of priority, or degree of importance attached to those criteria, it is usually the practical angle which received most attention from the field. However, such an emphasis can raise a significant degree of tension for the academic researcher working in an institutional environment,such as universities, which may place greater value on 'pure' or 'theoretical' research as opposed to 'applied.'

Expectations of research

There can be three sets of expectations to be contended with in connection with research projects:

: firstly, the expectations of the researchers, which may include the possibility of discovering possible "answers" to hitherto unexplored phenomena; to disprove or confirm existing opinions, views or theories; and to raise further questions for investigation.

: secondly, the expectations of those bodies and agencies sponsoring the research for 'results' which have "immediate implications for the field or for policy." (Stephens 1981)

Stephens (1981) and Elsey (1981) highlighted the tensions which can arise for researchers wishing to undertake longitudinal studies or projects which will support the further development of adult education as a respected academic study when the practice of the major funding agencies in the field is to concentrate on short term projects of a specifically practical nature.

: thirdly, the expectations of those wishing to apply results to their particular situations or problems, i.e. the adult educators.

For practitioners in the field the value and relevance of projects may be mainly in the extent to which research findings will help them to do their job in a more effective manner. Problems, in this respect, can arise when the researchers have little understanding either of adult education or the practice environment. However, one of the interesting features of adult education research is that a significant amount of the research has been carried out by people who are also practitioners and the divorce between research and practice has not been so marked as in other fields or even other areas of education. Mee (1978) noted that the majority of "researchable ideas" were likely to arise from the situations in which practitioners worked.

Whatever the reasons for undertaking research and whatever the type of project or methodology employed, one of the considerations which has to be borne in mind is that new knowledge produced from 'applied' research, to be of any use at all, has to be accessible, understood, and valued positively by the practitioners in the institutional or non-formal or informal environments in which they work, as well as answering the creative needs of the researchers.

Many writers have drawn attention to what Plecas and Sork (1986) call "the paucity of substantive critical and interpretative research on specific topics." The causes of this are ascribed to a number of factors, amongst which is the failure of researchers to build on each others' work.

Courtney (1986) takes his analysis of this problem one stage further back. In considering the contribution which research makes to adult education his main contention is that the real issue is how research is produced, as that is the only matter over which there is some measure of control. The quality of research can be influenced by training researchers in appropriate ways and

> "ensuring that this training involves them in the raising of quality questions ...... In general, I believe that the issue of relevance and value in adult education research depends almost totally on how researchers are educated and trained - that is, how they are admitted to the profession, socialized within it, and provided with the structures and incentives necessary to encourage independent thinking and creative response to problem-solving."

Practices

The constraints operating on adult educators in their attempts to undertake research on the field of adult education are manifold:

: the pressures of working in institutional environments which value research above teaching, whilst the general ethos of adult education field inverts those values.

: of researching in a field where the primary emphasis is on discipline curriculum matters, such as the teaching of literature or geology.

: of operating in a field in which it is by no means certain that there is a respected body of knowledge, or theoretical discipline which can be classified as 'adult education.'

: of experiencing what Boshier (1980) describes as being "overly diffident about the theory-building process," and apparently feeling so unsure of the sure grounding of existing research that adult educators fail to build on each other's work (Plecas & Sork, 1986)

Bernbaum (1980) summarised the position as

"The question of adequate personnel for educational research,

> the problem of developing suitable analytical concepts and theories, and the difficulty of establishing a cumulative basis for the research are ... serious obstacles."

Plecas and Sork (1986) consider the insecurities of adult education researchers to be so great that the field now suffers from four major diseases which inhibit useful knowledge production and theory building :

: gogymania, or "an uncontrollable urge to make much ado about nearly nothing." This is evidenced when any new relationship between two variables is immediately hailed as so important that it can form the basis of a new sub-discipline.

: mapomania, in which a field of study without a clear focus and uncertain of its direction moves in several directions at once and extends its knowledge base but does not deepen it.

: definimania, or a tendency to redefine a concept by assigning it different definitions eg. lifelong/permanent/recurrent/continuing education.

: lexicophilia, or "an irrational desire to embrace new terminology," which is the rush to adopt new terms synonymous with those already understood and accepted by the field.

Methodology

Although Plecas and Sork may be painting a rather extreme picture of the ills affecting adult education research it is the case that they have highlighted a problem. Given the fluid and diffuse nature of the field the problem of research methodologies is very acute. Historically, researchers have tended to be divided into two camps as regards methodologies, the qualitative or the quantitative, with the adoption of either approach depending on the nature of the research project. There has been evidenced a reluctance to mix these approaches as appropriate, and as neither is totally suitable for every occasion such a divide has contributed to the inhibition of many of those in the field to undertake research. The problem for much of adult education research was that the social science research models which were primarily adopted, for various reasons including funding, were those of the natural or physical sciences and these could be totally inappropriate to the nature of the 'problem' being investigated. However, not to use such models was to risk a probable outcome of the work being dismissed as, at best, academically unsound, or, at worst, trivial or marginal. The increasing use, and acceptability, of mix-and-match research techniques and inter-disciplinary studies is a development which can only be welcomed in that it is more conducive to the nature of the field itself. The wider range of research styles, such as ethnographic studies, may be more appropriate for illumination of some perennial adult education "problems," eg. motivation and mid-career changes.

Funding

The problem of the funding of major research projects in adult education is a reflection of the research practices hitherto applied by the research councils. These have applied the same criteria for judging proposals as those from other fields, usually the social sciences, irrespective of the relevance, or irrelevance, of some of those criteria for the adult education field.

More importantly, the criteria for funding of projects can determine the nature of the work finally undertaken, and that has direct implications for the form, weight and value of projects in the field.

Funding has been obtained from major agencies, eg. DES, Leverhulme, Gulbenkian, Rowntree, Manpower Services Commission and of course, NIACE has undertaken a number of valuable research projects. However, there does appear to be a need to convince a wider range of funding agencies, as well as those who have already funded projects, of the need for greater attention to be paid to adult and continuing education research and development projects.

One view is that with the recent demographic changes and social and technological revolution, proposals that are methodologically sound, relate to policy, and also contain wider theoretical implications in the social sciences should be received favourably by the major funding agencies. (Bernbaum 1980)

Publication and Dissemination

Debates over whether adult education is itself an academically acceptable field for research can be circular in nature, long-winded in length, and their intensity correlated closely with the academic purity of the contestants. However, irrespective of the nature and value of the arguments it still remains the case that adult education as a field needs researching and as an extension of that claim it has to be emphasised that research results need disseminating in a systematic fashion if these are to be of use. Experience indicates that reliance on the "trickle-down" or "cascade" theory of dissemination is not a very effective way of informing the field of many of the valuable pieces of work that have been undertaken.

Many worthwhile small-scale projects such as postgraduate dissertations and theses remain inaccessibly locked in library store-rooms. There is a need to encourage researchers, whether staff or students, to publish the results of their investigations even if this is only through departmental research or local authority education bulletins, short reports in journals or at conferences, departmental monographs.

> "Dissertations which ought to be one of the principle vehicles for the generation of basic research in adult education figure marginally in the volume of submissions to the major publications of the field." (Courtney 1986)

The clear need for further research in the field can almost lead to the temptation of attempting to direct postgraduate students, as far as is reasonable, into investigation of areas which are considered to be important or for which there appears to be the greatest need in order to try and establish or add to a cumulative basis of research within a particular field.

> "The matter of dissemination also applies to the need for easier access to those research findings on developments in related disciplines which have implications for adult education theory and practice." (Charnley 1984)

Conclusion

It would appear from the number of concerns expressed that research in the field of adult education is at best, only slightly forward from the point of "take-off" ascribed to it in 1981 (Stephens) but at worst is still in the same state as it was in the 1960s when it was described by Jensen, Liveright and Hallenbeck (1964) as an "emerging" academic discipline. Matters may have improved in British adult education research in the past five years but it is a moot point as to whether the research field has improved generally in any very significant way, although there are, of course, notable improvements in certain areas. The reasons for the slow development may be that those in a position to undertake research in the field are decreasing in number, experiencing grave increases in workload, and have little time to address the research issues which have to be faced, but if matters are to improve time and other resources will have to be found to address these.

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POLITICAL REPRESSION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE U.S. 1919-1920

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For the most part, the historical literature dealing with adult education in the United States has tended to emphasise the nature and development of white, male, middle-class institutions that reflected and legitimized bourgeois values and ideology (Adams, 1944; Grattan, 1955; Knowles, 1957, 1967). Moreover, the majority of the research has proceeded with the implicit assumptions that adult education has taken place in a social milieu that lacked conflict, a milieu in which Americans are portrayed as one, big happy family. No less apparent in the historical literature is the implication that adult education activities were simply "liberal" and "vocational" (some would say "pragmatic"), occurring in a vacuum, and separated somehow from the circumstances and conditions which constituted the human struggles for daily existence. These factors have lent an apolitical facade to the nature of adult education history in the United States, a phenomenon which has manifested itself through professors of adult education onto their students. One consequence that has emerged is a failure of students of adult education to consider critical historical investigation as a serious and viable research canon. Particularly lacking in the research activities has been inquiry directed to adult education for change in the United States.

To reverse this tendency, the following scenario attempts to show how the combination of a political elite, assorted groups of super-patriots, a sensationalist press, along with a silent or at least unquestioning majority of the American people allowed a hand-full of political activists and reactionaries to meet the perceived threat that adult educators had posed to the stability of the structure during the years just before and following the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, the fear that adult educators would continue to enjoy the momentum that had brought considerable changes and challenges to the legitimacy of the structure of American society spurred a "practical" counter-conscience reaction which has been labeled by American historians as "the Red Scare" and which may have had much to do with establishing the direction of the theory and practice of adult education in the United States to the present day.

The Lusk Committee

In the spring and early summer of 1919, eleven members of the New York State Legislature convened in New York City to investigate "the purposes and objects, tactics and methods, of the various forces now at work in the United States, and particularly in the state of New York, which are seeking to undermine and destroy, not only the government under which we live, but also the structure of American society"(Proceedings, p. 7). This ad hoc group of legislators, to be known as the Lusk Committee, after its tenacious chairman, Clayton R. Lusk, had organized itself in a period of extreme national hysteria. As its investigation unfolded, it became apparent that adult educators were a major focus, indeed a target, of the committee's activities.

Three events or series of events stand out as the dialectical catalysts that created the social milieu in which the Committee found itself.

First, the Great War had created in America a jingoist spirit which brought with it a neurotic need for its citizens to compete for the title of "who is most loyal." This was not particularly unusual, since throughout their history, Americans had always found themselves caught up in the fervor of nationalism whenever the country had become involved in an armed conflict. In fact, in 1898 the intensity of this curious national passion had probably contributed more to starting the Spanish-American War than any combination of political and economic factors. Theodore Roosevelt no doubt expressed well the feelings of most citizens when he observed that President McKinley's "little adventure" "was not a very good war, but it was the best we could get." Of course, America eventually became involved in what was to be known as World War I, and the fact that it was fought as "the war to end all wars" not only justified the struggle for most Americans but seemed to make it necessary.

Secondly, the 1917 Russian Revolution had frightened many people, especially the ruling social, political, and economic elite in western capitalist countries. The fact that socialist movements had gained some ground and enjoyed varying degrees of success in virtually all these countries during the thirty odd years immediately preceding the Soviet upheaval played no small part in the status quo's belief that their hegemony was also on the wane. Consequently, the credo of the America's ruling elite --"if it happened in Russia, it could happen here"-- may not have been entirely an idle observation. Of course, the frequent argument that essential differences in the political, economic and other historical conditions existed between the two countries, and thus would assure a gradual process for social reconstruction in the United States, carried little weight with powerful, conservative elements. Their position was uncompromising and clear: "If you've seen one Bolshevik, you've seen them all."

Thirdly, and closely related to the second phenomenon, it was no secret, that during the 55 odd years following the Civil War, a number and variety of non-traditional adult education programmes had challenged, with varying degrees of success, the supposed egalitarian nature of American society. In fact, a few reforms had resulted as legislators succumbed to the political interest groups which were the outgrowth of these educational movements. More importantly, America's consciousness was changing. Reform was in the air and adult educators were leading the way. These progressive-minded men and women may have promoted assorted theories and doctrines, but the mosaic produced was social change. Moreover, many felt that education for social change could and should occur outside formal institutions or "schools." Their counter-hegemonic educational activities anticipated a definitive description of adult education which Lyman Bryson proposed years later. "Adult education," wrote Bryson in 1936, should be considered as "all activities with an educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life"(Quoted in Grattan, p. 3). Samuel

Gompers, a conservative labour leader and long tenured president of the "elitist" American Federation of Labor, once observed that "one could get the best education on the picket line." No doubt, many labor educators, who for years had struggled to make workers aware of their oppressive position in a suppressive system, could easily identify with Gompers' remark. But it is not surprising that after toiling for years in the labor movement Gompers would lament that his earlier views on education had been too limited. He noted in his autobiography that "since traditionally and even now the mass of information obtained upon the labor question is from those whose interests and politics are divergent from those of labor it is for this and other reasons, I have said that if the income of the AF of L were ten times what it is or may have been at its highest peak, I would spend every dollar of it in publishing, printing, and education, and for the men and women to carry the gospel of the fundamental justice of the labor movement for a better life for all"(Gompers, p. 443-444).

Daniel DeLeon, the radical labor leader and socialist, may have expressed the position of many who were dedicated to education for change when he insisted that "an educated person must give the worker the full benefit of his education, because their ignorance was due to no fault of their own, but poverty"(Quoted in Schlossberg, p. 87). Indeed, for years those sympathetic to the socialist cause had toured the country disseminating literature, lecturing, organizing special interest groups, unionizing workers, and campaigning for state and local office seekers. By 1912, it was becoming apparent that their educational efforts were having some impact. In the summer of that year, Robert Hoxie, a political researcher, compiled data which showed that over 2000 socialists held public office in the America, most of them in municipal and state administrations. The national party numbered 119,000 paying members. Eugene V. Debs, the party's presidential candidate in 1912, polled 897,000 votes, about 6% of the popular vote. Clayton Lusk pointed to the dangers of these movements in his opening comments when the committee convened on June 12, 1919: "The most important questions of the day are socialism and labor. The men who are leading in both fields of thought and action are quite aware of their international character. The American public is not. It must be educated to see that every big movement on its other side has its parallel in the United States, and that they are closely interlocked and so governed by the same group of men that we cannot ignore the European situation. Otherwise our people cannot understand the centralized strategy behind the action. It cannot realize the tremendous forces at work nor the crisis present and impending"(Proceedings, p. 39).

The committee assumed "anti-Americanism" with every challenge to the status quo. Thus, it made little difference if the men and women involved in counter-hegemonic education were called leftists, unionists, pacifists, muckrakers, socialists, or radicals. They were all lumped together as subversives. All, no matter what the label, were somehow dedicated to the "growth of the radical revolutionary movement due largely to the effect of propaganda"(Proceedings, p. 7). However, what the committee considered to be propaganda , others viewed as education, and vice versa, a position that recently has been developed even further by "radical" sociologists. " Propaganda," as the Lusk Committee defined it, referred to "the methods employed to form, influence, guide and direct public opinion, with a view to controlling public sympathy and action." Moreover, there were two types of propaganda--propaganda by "the word" and by "the deed." "Propaganda by the use of words, that is to say, through the employment of written and spoken argument," was as dangerous as "propaganda by deed, namely some sort of action, either individual or organized, calculated to affect public sympathy or conduct"(Proceedings, p. 2292). One wonders why these remarks never occurred to the committee members as representative of their attempts to control the contents of adult education and of the deeds associated with the numerous arrests and jailing of adult educators, both of which was directed and promoted by them to "form, influence, guide, and direct public opinion." The hypocrisy was further manifested in the comments of one investigator who praised the efforts of "public school authorities with the cooperation of the legislatures of almost every state in the United States to Americanization and citizenship training as vital and integral part of the school curricula as the universal teaching of the justly famed three r's." It was essential, he continued, that "we give children in their early youth and the newer adults a real and sympathetic appreciation of American ideals and a respect for the institutions through which these ideals find realization, so their patriotism will be deep-rooted and lasting and their loyalty to this nation so strong that it will withstand the influences of subversive propaganda"(Proceedings, p. 1143).

The Lusk Committee was especially concerned with Americanization programs. The fear of foreigners and their "imported radical ideas" often dominated the committee members' dialogue particularly in regards to the "inadequacy of programs and teachers." Concern was also expressed about the fact that nearly 60,000 adult immigrants were registered in Americanization classes in the State of New York alone, and although this figure comprised only about 2% of the total population, it "far exceed(ed) the attendance of the native adult population." Furthermore, the Committee warned that although "the term Americanization when properly employed is expressive of the process which the foreigner undergoes in orientating himself to American ideals and traditions, as well as to customs and manners of the country, unfortunately, the word has been applied by some social workers to describe their activities, which have a tendency to retard rather than advance the process of Americanization"(Proceedings p. 2294).

To correct these irregularities intensive teachers' training programs were proposed since "the necessity for training teachers in the field of immigration and adult education to counteract revolutionary and un-American ideas, is almost wholly ignored (and) this is a fundamental weakness in all of the organized plans which has come to the committee's attention"(Proceedings, p. 2297-98). Justifying these teachers' training sounded strangely similar to what another educational "investigator," Joseph Goebbels, might have said a few years later: "The public school teacher is a representative and officer of the state as it now exists. He is employed by that state to teach loyalty to its institutions and obedience to its laws. He is not employed to explore the controversial fields of political economy with the view of championing utopian schemes for reform or change"(Proceedings, p. 2299)!!

Also recommended was "intensive instruction of the same kind in vocational and shop classes," since it would "increase the loyalty of the workers to their employers." One investigator proudly related an incident concerning a strike in Connecticut in which, of the 53% of the workers who walked-out, only 3% were workers who were attending or had attended Americanization classes. The reason for this, he argued, lay in the fact that those workers who attended the Americanization classes were "able to speak English (and) could talk to the foreman, and problems could be grasped." In addition, he noted, that "when an employee believes that his advancement in the shop is somehow connected with his advancement in his class (which sounds suspiciously like blackmail), he takes his job more seriously"(Proceedings 2292-93).

The attacks on the Americanization programs were closely related to assaults by the committee upon settlement houses and churches where many Americanization classes met. Jane Addams, who has come to personify the settlement house in America, was accused by the committee on several occasions for taking an active part in radical, pacifist, and other un-American movements (Proceedings, pp. 971, 972, 975, 976, 979, 980-81, 992-94, 999, 1000, 1019, 1083, 1978, 1989). The committee was certain that many settlement people "had followed Miss Addams example," for "in many of the neighborhood houses radical and revolutionary ideas are taught and hospitably received"(Proceedings, p. 2212). One association, The United Neighborhood Houses of New York, was particularly offended by the committee's attempt to control the content of education and the dissemination of knowledge. In a letter to Lusk, the president of the association protested that the "houses would lose value if it presented Americanization from just one viewpoint (since) both sides should be given an equal hearing (because) truth cannot suffer in the long run from contact with fallacy." Moreover, he declared, the "United Neighborhood Houses in principal opposes the repression of ideas except where change, economic or political, by force is advocated, pernicious principals no less worthy ones thrive on repression. The latter alone can survive free discussion." After the letter was read, one of the Committee members was curious as to whether the letter-writer "would bring an advocate of prostitution into a forum and let everyone consider the question (or) if he would give the impression that the question was debatable"(Proceedings, pp. 2314-15). The committee also condemned "the custom and conduct in many settlement houses to invite radical and revolutionary speakers (and again it must be emphasized that these terms were never defined) to occupy their platform for the reason that the audience is in many cases already predisposed towards radical ideas and the effect of the radical or revolutionary speeches can be none other than to crystallize or confirm the radical beliefs of the hearers"(Proceedings, pp. 2316-2317). No evidence was provided to support these allegations.

The Lusk Committee attacked the adult education activities of clergymen (representing literally every denomination) who had distributed pacifist literature even before America's entry into the war and who, in some cases, had expressed that their sympathies lay with one of the socialist causes. Much testimony was received regarding peace education movements which had occurred in the numerous small, insignificant communities which dotted the mid-western and western states(Proceedings, pp. 1135-38). These activities, according to the committee, represented "an International sentiment to supersede national patriotism and effort, and this internationalism was based on pacifism, in the sense that it opposed all wars between nations and developed at the same time the class consciousness that was to culminate in relentless class warfare. In other words, it was not really peace that was the goal, but the abolition of the *patriotic, warlike spirit of nationalities*"(Proceedings, p. 11)!!

The committee's concern regarding "the socialist elements in the clergy" represented the kind of illogical reasoning which either revealed the intellectual capacity of the investigators, the hysteria which gripped the times, or both. One member soberly explained that "there is a ever growing tendency towards radicalism in the clergy (and) much emphasis (must be) given to the fact that the clergy is underpaid and for this reason they are unable to *see the economic problems in their proper perspective*"(Proceedings, p. 2317)!! It was true that several churchmen had risen to prominent positions in the socialist movement. However, many of them came to socialism for the same reasons that one prolific writer on the subject of workers' education and a well known Boston Episcopalian minister, William Bliss, did. (Bliss was also one of the original founders of the first Nationalist Club, a Junto-like adult discussion group which revolved around the concept of "The Collective Commonwealth," as developed in Edward Bellamy's best seller, Looking Backward. Scores of these clubs were organized in the United States between 1889 and 1895.) Bliss admitted that he had joined the movement as a means "to unite reformers to socialism by making it broad enough, free enough, practical enough to include all that is of value, no matter whence it comes, and replace jealousy between reformers by cooperation for the general good (since) a narrow petty jealous socialism can never and ought never to win the country"(Proceedings, p. 1130). It should be noted that this was the same Bliss who had once referred to William Jennings Bryan, the three-time Democratic candidate for the presidency, as a "true socialist," a thought that would have greatly disturbed the conservative Bryan(Quoted in Quint, p. 247). Nor was Chautauqua, the hallmark of American "liberal" education, safe from the committee's attacks. Included in their report were excerpts from a speech by Walter Raushenbusch "an educational expert," ex- banker, former secretary of the treasury, and professor of history at the Rochester Theological Seminary. Raushenbusch was not only certain that Chautauqua was "full of socialism," but he concluded that he did "not recall a Chautauqua speaker who is not talking and teaching Socialist doctrine"(Proceedings, p. 1112). This would have no doubt shocked former Chautauqua speakers like U.S. Grant, Teddy Roosevelt and William Rainey Harper. This is but one of many examples of how the committee manufactured "experts" to promote its cause.

The Lusk Committee was directly responsible for the arrest of thousands of adult educators. Scores were imprisoned and hundreds were deported. (For a precise breakdown of arrests, prison sentences, and deportations see, Proceedings, pp. 23-28, Chamberlain, pp. 9-52, Levin, pp. 68-70, and Burlingame pp.31-33). How many lives were ruined due to harassment is impossible to estimate. As for the report, which provides a detailed account of the Lusk Committee's daily business, it appears, at first glance, to be an exhaustive and scholarly inquiry. Upon closer examination, however, one discovers that bulk can easily be mistaken for substance. What emerges is a story of distorted class perceptions, attempts to arbitrarily differentiate "good" from "bad" education, and persecution and repression of the adult education community throughout the country.

The Lusk Committee's effect on American consciousness continued to impact the country's political, social, and educational environment even after it adjourned in the spring of 1920. Significant and important were the growth and influence of the Klu Klux Klan and other superpatriotic groups and the decline of the organized labor movement, a phenomenon certainly promoted in part by the open shop movement known as "The American Plan." "Red-baiting" became entrenched as a polemic tactic and strategy within the realm of political discourse. Federal legislation limiting immigration was passed in 1924 and several states added statutes dealing with sedition to their legal codes. Radical political parties became even more fragmented as a new spirit of nationalism emerged. Within the educational milieu, a movement to censor social science textbooks swept the country in the 1920's, while at the same time, 19 states passed laws requiring loyalty oaths for teachers at all academic levels. More importantly, it appears that critical thinking as a guide for research and practice diminished dramatically within the emerging professional, academic community. In fact, it is quite possible that the failure of the majority of these American adult educators to challenge the assumptions underpinning the political ideology of their culture may have been determined in part by the consciousness shaped by the repressive activities conducted by the Lusk Committee and their political allies. This observation may seem a bit presumptuous, but it is certainly worthy of further research and discourse. Perhaps this inquiry will tell us something about why adult educators in the United States have tended to avoid political issues associated with social change within both the academic environment and the society "in toto."

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DISCIPLINE-BASED RESEARCH: BRIEFING PAPER

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On Tuesday 8th July, the conference will subdivide into three parallel discussion groups, one of which will be concerned with discipline-based research. The purpose of this short briefing paper is to suggest some questions which the participants might want to consider either in their own papers or in discussion.

We have three one and a half hour sessions on this, during the morning and afternoon, and I am asking a number of people if they would be prepared to speak for about 10 minutes to short papers (1000-1500 words) on any aspect of the topic they choose. These papers should provide a stimulus for the discussion, without of course limiting it. I would be grateful to receive copies of the papers before the conference, so that they can be distributed in time.

Any discussion of academic disciplines raises both philosophical questions on the one hand, and professional/institutional ones on the other, and it may be useful to separate these two aspects of the topic, at least initially.

Organised knowledge is typically categorised in terms of disciplines, often embodied in academic departments. There are of course the basic epistemological questions to be asked about the nature of knowledge in general and academic disciplines in particular: for example whether the knowledge we have in some sense corresponds to the real world, or whether it is socially and historically relative: in shorthand terms, knowledge as structure or knowledge as construct. However, I suspect that we might more usefully concentrate on less fundamental but just as interesting questions about the nature and ethos of different disciplines.

One possible starting-point is to ask how the discipline has changed (if at all) over, say, the last twenty years. Have there been developments which have significantly altered the nature or orientation of the discipline? Is the discipline more distinct from other disciplines than it was, or less? Then there are questions about the internal cohesion or unity of the discipline. It is perhaps fairly widely assumed in higher education that each discipline is (in some sense) a whole, but some disciplines may be less cohesive or tight than others. For example, undergraduate courses in some disciplines have a large and non-negotiable core, whereas in others there seems to be a good deal of choice. Does this imply that the latter are merely loose configurations of sub-fields? Does the degree of unity change with time: is mathematics less of a 'whole' than it used to be, the biological sciences more? And how far is the internal unity a matter of logic/structure or style/culture? Is there something about being a sociologist or psychologist which transcends the various paradigms, schools and factions in those disciplines? A particular kind of approach, or orientation, or tension? Finally, we might want to consider why we hesitate to use the term discipline at all in some cases, preferring words such as subject, field or area.

This last question in particular leads us on the problem of education, and discipline-based study in adult education. A common traditional view has been that the study of education takes place in and through 'foundation' or 'contributory' disciplines, such as philosophy, history, psychology, sociology or economics. Does that imply that education is not a discipline but a field or focus of application? Are there particular problems in studying the education of adults, which do not exist, for example, in the study of secondary education? Does the notion of interdisciplinarity imply that one can take 'parts' of different disciplines and somehow fuse them, in this case in the study of education, in other cases in the study of, for example, social administration, management, town planning, medicine or perhaps engineering ?

Such questions shade into the professional and institutional issues raised by disciplines and interdisciplinarity. The academic world is largely a professional world, with relatively clear professional structures and identities. Some of these may become a bit blurred at the postgraduate and research levels, but the whole apparatus of departments, chairs, faculties, journals, conferences, research councils and the like maintains lines of demarcation which affect both academic careers and institutional management. To what extent do researchers in adult education feel cut off from their 'parent' discipline? It is not easy to think of cases where research in adult education has affected 'mainstream' research in the discipline, though political scientists, local historians and perhaps developmental psychologists might want to argue otherwise.

And where do adult education departments sit in all this? Where do the people in such departments find their identity? Does it lie in their subject/ discipline (i.e. what they teach) or their students (who they teach)? Do they define their profession in terms of content or process? Do they have both a primary and reserve identity? And how do such departments relate to faculties and subject departments, or for that matter, to the registrary? What, if anything, binds such departments together, if it is not some conception of adult education as an activity or a field of study? And do these ambiguities of identity reflect (or cause) ambiguities in structure and funding?

Finally, we might want to consider some questions which have a more direct bearing on policy. Should we attempt to strengthen discipline-based research in adult education departments, by for example creating research networks, or a computerised data-base? Or is it preferable to strengthen links with subject departments, with each lecturer perhaps having associate membership of the relevant 'internal' department? Is the study of adult education as a field (or discipline or whatever) best carried out under the broad aegis of an education faculty, or in conjunction with professionally-orientated departments (e.g. medicine, social studies) or independently? How can lecturers and departments best cope with the kinds of tensions and ambiguities referred to above? If the general structure of higher education institutions is based on disciplines or groups of disciplines, does this mean that there will always be an organisational and professional ambiguity about adult education? Can that and should that be resolved ?

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

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At an early meeting of SCUTREA we were still debating whether or not there was a distinct area of study, identifiable as 'philosophy of Adult Education'. Claims about the validity of 'philosophy of Education' were themselves still suspect in some quarters and we had on record, RWK Paterson's view that '... since there is no autonomous philosophy of adult education, there can be no philosophers of adult education' (Paterson 1965).

By the late 1970s however writers as cautious as Mary Warnock were claiming that 'It cannot any longer be seriously doubted that there is such a thing as the philosophy of education' (Warnock 1977). Between 1975 and 1979 two books about the philosophy of adult education had appeared (Lawson 1975 and Paterson 1979). So what had brought about the change?

In one sense there was nothing new in the idea of 'philosophy of education' as a subject. Most of the writing in this field however was seen as prescriptive and exhortatory. It tended to be concerned mainly with expressions of views about what education ought to consist of. Both in respect of child education and adult education there were philosophies of education enshrined in literature and in practice but these consisted mainly of sets of beliefs and values subscribed to by various practitioners and schools of thought.

It is now fairly generally recognised that under the influence of R S Peters, Paul Hirst et al, the 1960s and '70s produced the philosophical analysis of educational concepts *mainly* in the 'ordinary language' school of linguistic analysis. This was perceived as a neutral or objective attempt to clarify the meanings of concepts used in educational discourse, and to identify the values implicit in educational language and practice. Behind these in turn could be discerned philosophically important questions in the field of epistemology ethics and so on.

The 'central' and the 'peripheral' meanings of concepts were explored in attempts, to identify 'correct' and 'incorrect' use of concepts, and behind usage there were implications for what might be appropriately regarded as 'education' properly so-called. The criteria for the 'proper' application of concepts were sought.

What seemed to emerge from this activity however, was an awareness of complexity and ambiguity rather than clarity in respect of educational concepts but at least the processes of analysis became more disciplined as a consequence, and for example techniques of analysis involving symbolic logic have been used to explore the logic of various concepts and arguments, and their attendant strengths, weaknesses and contradictions (see Evers 1979 or Brandon 1982). Put in slightly different terms, philosophy of education was seen, more exclusively as a 'second order' activity asking questions about the 'first order' ordinary use of words in educational contexts.

What also emerged was a realisation that the alleged value neutrality of second order analysis could not be sustained. Prescription and stipulative definitions seemed to creep in and this in turn influenced first order usage.

The problem was first identified by Edel (1973) when he pointed out that in effect analysis was itself a form of prescription. In explicating, concepts or terms such as 'education' 'training' 'adult education' teaching and learning', re-descriptions are given using educators' metaphors and analogies, and making use of other educational concepts as reference points or comparators. The comparisons made and the distinctions drawn depend upon the reference points which are used and my own analysis of the concept of 'training' has been criticised on precisely this point. My analysis of training was said to be distorted (Thompson 1976) because I used 'education' rather than some other concept as the starting point of my analysis. Given other comparators, the analysis (arguably) would have been different.

The general point to be made is that analysis is itself a value laden activity. In educational contexts we are not using 'ordinary language' in any significant sense. We are using educators' language which is a technical language. It is true that there is ordinary usage of terms such as 'education' and 'teaching' as for example 'this will teach you a lesson' or 'last nights party was an education' but these examples have little in common with educators' usage.

The analysis of education appears to be conducted mainly if not exclusively by people already on the inside of the activity of 'education' and moreover within educational institutions. They are 'insiders' already committed to the language game in Wittgenstein's sense. They share an existing conceptual framework and its associated values. The comparators or points of reference are therefore pre-selected, and allegedly 'central uses' of concepts are defined by educators for whom they are already central.

This seems to be especially true within adult education where analysis of the concept of 'adult education' may concentrate variously upon its closeness to or its distance from the concept of 'education'.

Thus we arrive at conservative views and 'radical' views about what constitutes a proper understanding of 'adult education'. This concept is often characterised as a student centred, discussion based and problem solving activity and some analyses are derived from a concept of 'adulthood' as a primary qualifier of the concept of 'education'. The concept of 'adulthood' that is used is however more normative than descriptive therefore pre-existing values colour the analysis at each stage in a systematic way.

Similarly, concepts such as 'teaching' and 'learning' in philosophical writing tend to be characterised mainly in terms of 'intention' and not say in terms of 'changes in behaviour' more characteristic of a psychologist's concept of learning. Educational usage tends to reserve the concept of 'teaching' for contexts in which there is the intentional transmission of knowledge or the intention to help someone to acquire knowledge or skills. 'To learn' is often taken to imply that a positive attempt to learn is involved which might then be expanded to include say 'practising' as a necessary requirement for an educational application of the term 'learning'.

In such examples, it might be said that the analyst is accurately noting in a neutral way how given words are used, but this is to reduce the analysis to simple empirical description. The bigger claim is that in some sense the 'real' concept implicit in or behind the word is being explicated. On this view, the philosophical enterprise is to locate the core of the concept by identifying peripheral or less appropriate use from central or more correct use. More counting of examples will not suffice, because it is a value judgement and not frequency of use that makes it an important example.

What is needed to fulfil the stronger analysts' claim is a set of criteria which, if the analysis is to be objective, have to be external to the language being analysed. This is a requirement which is difficult to satisfy and analysis seems always to be from within the framework which is itself being explored. There seems therefore no way in which a non-prescriptive clarification of a concept can be arrived at. This is not to say that the analyses carried out are useless but only that they are limited.

In effect we seem to succeed only in saying that in a given context, given certain values, philosophical presuppositions or a given ideology 'this' or 'that' is what 'education' 'adult education' or 'teaching' and 'training' mean. The correct or central meanings are those which are consistent with the various values and presuppositions in that context. The educational context and educational discourse are therefore widened into a broader cultural and philosophical context and this is the point at which other disciplines such as sociology and history begin to impinge to support rather than to supplant philosophy.

The outcome for the philosophy of education seems to be manifest in a move back toward exploration of the general ideas which underpin educational concepts and educational practice. There are signs of a move beyond conceptual analysis into an exploration of the educational implications of political philosophy, legal philosophy, and various 'isms', and ideologies. This seems to be a more fruitful way forward because it counteracts the tendency to provide a narrow educator's view of education. It brings education back into the broader cultural context of which it is a part, but the discipline imposed by attempts at conceptual analysis continues to make its mark.

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A RESEARCHABLE POLITICS OF ADULT EDUCATION?

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The object of adult education research turns out to be, more often than not, adult learning and its public provision or professional facilitation. On the face of it, therefore, there seems little part for sociology and politics to play except that of providing some account of the social and political 'contexts' in which adults learn. There is a conceptual distinction to make, however, between adult learning on the one hand and and its public provision as adult education on the other. This distinction is often blurred, but it must surely enter into any consideration of what we mean by adult education as an object of research.

As well as the pressing need for greater conceptual clarity, the role of the state in Britain and elsewhere (Styler, 1984) with regard to the public provision of adult education also suggests directions in which sociology and politics might contribute to our knowledge, by generating theories of a substantive rather than a marginal or 'contextual' kind. In the shifting and dissolving boundaries of traditional disciplines for the organisation of research, the emergence in Britain over the last twenty years or so of social policy analysis or political economy paradigms seems particularly suggestive for a researchable politics of adult education. The object of research needs to be transformed from the 'social settings' or 'cultural contexts' of adult learning to the public provision of adult education and the role of the state in determining the form which it takes in quite specific historical conditions.

Although the time has never been riper, however, there do seem to be obstacles to the development of a political economy of adult education and for the inadequate sociology and politics of adult education which presently exists. These may be broadly summarised as follows :

1. The development of a profession of adult education, with its associated knowledge for application by practitioners, has resulted in a body of theory and research which is overwhelmingly practice oriented (Brookfield, 1986). There can be little doubt that the conceptual confusion of adult education with adult learning reflects priorities inherent in the professionalisation process.

2. This has led to a major focus upon applied adult learning theory, the distinctiveness of the organisation, provision and facilitation of adult learning, the nature of 'adulthood' and so on. In short, the hidden agenda of adult education as an object of theory and research has always been the identity problem of the professional adult educator. It is hardly surprising, then, that the role of the state in relation to the forms of publicly provided adult education has not been conceptualised or researched to anything like the same degree.

3. Professional concern for good practice has not only reduced the concept of adult education to that of adult learning, but has done so within a prevailing framework of humanistic psychology and sociological functionalism which is notoriously impervious, as are all psychological and functionalist paradigms, to a social policy or political economy approach.

4. The notion of critical theory, when not wholly lost, has been either misunderstood in its application (Ruddock, 1986) or else actually confused in its object : where radical adult education is confused with radical professional practice it is

unsurprising that a critical theory of adult education should be confused with a critical theory of professional practice (Mezirow, 1983). Selective borrowing from critical social theory has its parallel in selective borrowing from the uncritical sociological theories of functionalism (Boyd and Apps et al, 1980). Conceptual models and typologies devised in the course of 'professionalising' adult education knowledge should not be confused with adult education theory and research. While the status and nature of adult education knowledge remains open to philosophical dispute (Bright, 1985) issues of theory and research cannot finally be resolved. But it is as much a matter of logic as evidence that a theory of good professional practice does not necessarily constitute a theory of adult education.

5. A radical theory of adult education has sometimes been constructed along highly selective lines from the work of such writers as Habermas, Illich, Freire, Gramsci, Gelpi and so on. It seems important to distinguish this from a sociological or political approach to theory construction. For the result of this is not so much a political analysis as a utopian radicalism, the validity of which does not depend upon evidence from, for example, the specific historical forms of welfare capitalism in Britain, but upon the conceptual assumptions behind the selection process itself ('applying Freire to the inner cities').

6. The application of concepts selectively derived from Habermas or Freire is symptomatic perhaps of the need of professional workers in adult education for a distinctive discipline, but however

seminal these ideas may be they do not necessarily provide a good basis for the researchable political economy of adult education under, for example, contemporary welfare capitalism in Britain.

7. So professional needs tend to shape the direction of adult education theory and research. But another and possibly more powerful influence is constituted by the absence of the kind of ongoing public debate which accompanies the massive funding of schooling.

8. This in turn suggests that the context of controversy and ideology in adult education, being more professional than public in nature, finds reflection in its prevailing disciplines and research concerns. Given that adult learning and its provision are the primary focus of attention, dominant paradigms reduce the objects of sociological or political research to the status of 'social contexts' or 'cultural settings' in which all adults learn (Lovell, 1980).

9. Similarly, the incapacity of functionalism to address issues of conflict and power has been for many years a commonplace of debate in sociological and political theory, but it remains highly influential in the discourse of adult education. It is to be detected in the generalised concepts of oppression projected by radical theory as well as in the limitless accretion of concepts, definitions, typologies, modes and analytic categories generated in the literature of professionalism. The elucidation of adult education practice reflects traditional functionalist approaches more often than not : all the famous reports do, of course, but even the recent rediscovery of 'social purpose' or 'social commitment' is essentially reactive to developments in the economy and politics of the country as these affect adult education.

For reasons such as these, it is suggested that the prevailing construction of adult education theory and research is unlikely to generate hypotheses for a researchable sociology or politics of adult education as a form of public provision under welfare capitalism. That is, under the specific historical conditions we experience. The focus must be, not exclusively but to a large extent, upon the nature of state provision for adult education especially in so far as this is addressed to the purposes and priorities of the national and local state itself.

The incorporation of professional work into forms of public provision increasingly directed towards achieving social policy priorities of the state also suggests itself as another focus of sociological or political study.

The implication of adult education in the so-called crisis of the welfare state (Sarup, 1982 ; Mishra, 1984) is an appropriate object of research. The specific form of welfare capitalism in Britain determines the priorities of the state which are definitely reflected in adult education discourse. In such societies, the insignificance of social welfare policies with regard to the redistribution of wealth and life-chances is extremely well researched (Le Grand, 1982 ; George and Wilding, 1984), and in no instance more clearly than the failure of the state system of education to achieve equality of opportunity (Halsey et al, 1980). This system, of which adult education is indubitably part, was not, perhaps, intended to create equality of opportunity nor, perhaps, to address aspects of manpower planning, labour discipline or social control. Nevertheless, ideologies of public spending are inevitably involved, and these too may be an appropriate object of theory and research into the formation, implementation and evaluation of social welfare policies.

The current crisis of welfare in Britain is therefore one in which the ideologies, funding and structures of adult education are deeply implicated, and it is suggested that this must inevitably constitute a major focus of a sociology or politics, or a political economy, of adult education. Increasingly, adult education provision is being linked with the provision of other social services, as well as even more obviously with manpower planning strategies, and this too should lend itself to the development of 'discipline knowledge'.

As a discipline, social policy analysis was specifically constructed and developed in response to the fate of welfare capitalism. It therefore suggests various ways forward for a researchable politics of adult education, which focus not so much upon professional practice for adult learning as upon political ideologies for the public provision of adult education, especially in so far as such provision is addressed to policy objectives of the state.

In its classic literature (Marshall, 1965 : Pinker, 1971 : Titmuss, 1974 ; Townsend, 1975 ; George and Wilding, 1976 ; Miliband, 1982 ; Loney et al, 1983, etc.) social policy analysis has thrown up a range of ideological models of social welfare under capitalism which are relevant to a policy oriented theory and discourse of adult education. It has also provided, in the case of such policy areas as health, housing, social security, education and so forth, a wealth of relevant data derived from research. So much has been discovered about legislation, policy formation, impact, take-up, distributive, redistributive or regressive (or even unintended) social consequences, and other such factors, that it is hardly possible that a sociology of modern Britain could be divorced from the analysis of the social policies that determine much of its structure. This theory and evidence has, of course, come into existence for reasons not necessarily present in the case of adult education : urgent public concern, the scale of state funding involved, the direct interest of major academic disciplines, the ideological conflicts, and so on.

In the case of adult education it has proved easier to derive data about how individuals learn and about related institutional structures and professional functions. Evidence about how adult education works as a form of social welfare provision, reproducing capitalist relations or redistributing life-chances or whatever, would be very much more difficult to derive. The point is that, at present, there exists so very little by way of analytic categories to construct or evaluate research evidence along these lines. It is clearly not a case for 'applying Freire'.

However, it would seem that until work is done in adult education which is comparable with that achieved in relation to welfare by social policy analysis, the prospects for a researchable sociology or politics of adult education are not hopeful. Such an approach, focussing upon the role of the state under the specific conditions of welfare capitalism and the part played by adult education and adult educators in this, finds little purchase in political utopianism, humanistic psychology or sociological functionalism. So the relative lack of data is not the only problem : a clear conceptual distinction between adult learning and adult education is a necessary condition for research in this area.

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THE STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION: EPISTEMOLOGY, THE SUBJECT SPECIALIST AND RESEARCH

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Introduction

As an approach to this topic a contextualist perspective may be useful. This involves assuming that teaching and research, and indeed all the activities of lecturing staff within adult education, is a function of the context they are within and from which they emerge. In addition to financial, administrative, institutional, geographic and professional aspects this also includes individual differences and similarities between individuals in terms of their perception of and therefore approach to adult education and other contextual elements (e.g. role of, and degree of commitment to, adult education, attitude towards perceived relationship between first degree subject and adult education, intra-university relationships between departments, etc). The context as a whole contains a multitude of interacting and interdependent assumptions, expectations and definitions (a priori and post hoc) which are often implicit as opposed to explicit but which, nevertheless, influence and determine behaviour and activities individually and collectively. To fully understand the nature of these activities, (for present purposes this includes, obviously, research), and problems concerning their execution and effect, there is a need to consider and analyse both the context from which they emerge and the context to which they are directed (these could be different in terms of objectives and activities if not in a variety of other ways). Only by such analyses can implicit assumptions and value judgements be identified and the possible problems and self-fulfilling prophecies they may entail, be discussed.

Given the complexity of the context within which adult education and its research activities occurs it is not possible here to examine anything but a small part or individual dimension/aspect of it. The context to be considered in more detail further below is the epistemological. Research and teaching in adult education both involve knowledge and thereby define adult education epistemologically. Conversely, the epistemological base utilised by adult education defines and determines both its teaching and its research in content and method. Although teaching and research may be regarded as comprising different activities they may both be influenced in important ways by the same epistemological context they exist within. Therefore questions and analyses concerning the epistemological nature, origin and status of adult education's knowledge base may be expected to be of importance in terms of its teaching and research activities (depending on the outcome of the analysis). More specifically, the epistemological context of adult education is held to be centrally and fundamentally concerned with the epistemological relationship between it and disciplines such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, history etc.

Adult Education and Epistemology

A previous analysis (Bright, 1985) suggested that adult education may be epistemologically dependent upon such disciplines to the extent of being relatively indistinguishable from them i.e. the psychology, sociology, philosophy etc of adult education is essentially mainstream psychology, sociology, philosophy etc. This was attributed to the assumption and adoption, by adult education, of the academic, theoretical and intrinsic discipline model of the content-method relationship represented by such disciplines. The adoption of this model was held to be fundamentally contradictory since the epistemological structure and nature of adult education displayed opposite characteristics to those of its source disciplines. In terms of the latter, independence characterised inter-disciplinary relationships whilst dependence and inter-relatedness characterised intra-disciplinary relationships. In contrast, adult education was held to be characterised by dependent inter-disciplinary and independent intra-disciplinary relationships i.e. by the postulated literal incorporation of the independent academic, theoretical discipline model, adult education contradicts the model it incorporates and becomes a dependent inter-disciplinary composite of its independent source disciplines. It was also suggested that adult education's adoption of this model and the epistemology it implies, obviates the need to operate upon, inter-relate, synthesise, elaborate or focus its derived content in a manner to delineate the logic and validity of its own activity. Generally this was found not to be the case for other subjects taught at university and at other levels which stand in the same relationship to their knowledge source. Such subjects, which include, for example, town planning, nursing, and education itself, appear not to have adopted the theoretical academic model despite being dependent upon source disciplines which represent it. Such subjects appear to recognise the relationship and tension between theory and practice and define themselves essentially in terms of the latter, an emphasis which is reflected in both teaching and research. Assuming the logic of this analysis, the evidence supporting it and its assumption of the traditional vertical independence of intrinsic disciplines, it would appear to have important implications not least for the definition of adult education itself, its teaching and research activity, the status and treatment of its knowledge base within these activities and the role of the subject specialist operating within it.

With regard to the latter, a research function is institutionally present, the execution of which represents the major research effort within adult education. If the above analysis is correct, its implications for the subject specialist may be expected to be reflected in current and past research. Logically, if adult education's adoption of the theoretical, independent discipline model of the content-method relationship entails an inherent contradiction, the role of the subject specialist and the activities they engage in must also involve and express this contradiction. In terms of the above analysis, it is suggested that the term 'subject specialist' is a misnomer in that it neither applies to an individual's first degree specialism and its expression within adult education nor to an epistemologically distinct body of knowledge called adult education. In this sense the subject specialist is in an epistemological 'limbo'. Although expected to demonstrate research prowess in terms appropriate to an academic, theoretical, intrinsic discipline and despite being referred to as the 'specialist', the subject specialist within adult education is effectively reduced to generalist in the subject of her/his first degree. Because of the epistemological pervasiveness of the term 'adult' in all of its source disciplines, adult education's failure to attempt to delineate as a professional collective which aspects of the multitude of potentially relevant aspects within source disciplines are or how they can become more relevant, and the reduced teaching time allocated to source disciplines in adult education compared to undergraduate degrees in these subjects, the subject specialist is forced into a generalist mode which isolates her/him from both their specialist subject and adult education. This creates such problems as being out of touch with developments in their first discipline and consequently being out of date in terms of the knowledge they possess. Such problems obviously have research implications but they also generate a lack of confidence in terms of first disciplines and create professional identity problems. Is one a subject specialist working with adult education or a specialist in the subject of adult education? In terms of the above analysis the answer to both questions would appear to be in the negative, epistemologically. Asking or being aware of the question is important in itself, however; if adult education is to develop a distinct body of knowledge, either theoretically or practically defined, it must, it would seem, begin the process of considering answers to this question as, and as part of the process of developing, a professional entity.

Adult Education Research

Research is one important way by which a discipline or subject develops and consolidates epistemologically and professionally. The current paper, for example, represents (or at least attempts to represent) this process and amounts to research about research from an epistemological perspective i.e. it attempts to be reflective and, although it contains its own self-fulfilling and questionable assumptions, points to the possible existence of other assumptions and definitions endemic within current approaches to the epistemology of adult education. Yet, how much research of this epistemologically reflective kind is undertaken within adult education and, perhaps more importantly, how much research investigates the relationship between its theoretical knowledge base and its practical activity? Generally, the vast majority of research in adult education reflects directly its epistemological dependence upon and its indistinctiveness from, its source disciplines. Books and articles invariably adopt a within discipline stance and often merely regurgitate findings, principles, theories or perspectives from source disciplines with little interpretation since many of these are implicitly defined in terms of adults. Further and explicit differentiation of different types of adults relative to different theoretical conceptualisations often emanate from within the source disciplines themselves rather than from within adult education. A lot of research is not carried out by practitioners within adult education. Numerous books and articles concerned with the psychology of adults appear to written by psychologists or by individuals within adult education who adopt a discipline based approach at a fundamental level (mainly in the US). It could be argued, in this respect, that psychology, for example, has discovered the adult and is busily engaged in differentiating and describing the phenomenon in its own terms and the best methodologies with which to study it. Again in adult education, many books and articles on learning theories amount to 'cook-books' of learning principles which could equally be applied to non-adult education and which represent bad eclecticism in the use of mixed theoretical metaphors and philosophical models. Such research violates the epistemology of the theoretical discipline from which they are drawn and contradicts, because of the essentially but largely implicit practical orientation they have, the theoretical academic model of adult education. A practical approach may have to violate the independence of theoretical models within a discipline and/or that existing beetween disciplines, but this can only be done in full recognition of such an approach and the surrendering of a purely theoretical one. Adult education would appear to be equivocal in this regard and consequently its research fails to fulfil either approach to the detriment of its own identity.

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THE THEORY-PRACTICE PROBLEM AND PSYCHOLOGY AS A FOUNDATION DISCIPLINE IN ADULT EDUCATION

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In this paper, I shall examine two issues which, on the face of it, appear to be separate but which, in reality, are closely related. They are first, the problematic nature of the relationship between theory and practice and second, the place of a foundation discipline, in this case psychology, in education. I hope to show that through re-examining of the former we can find more appropriate and useful ways to conceptualise the latter.

The term 'foundation discipline' implies that there is a 'base' or 'source' of knowledge and principles that somehow has a clear, supporting connection with a 'superstructure' of practice. To take some concrete examples; doctors in their practice 'draw upon' foundation disciplines such as anatomy and biochemistry, engineers likewise relate to physics. These practitioners have to 'take account of' the relevant foundation disciplines otherwise patients would die and bridges fall down! The foundation disciplines therefore consist of bodies of organised knowledge (or 'theory') from which rules and principles can be 'applied' in practice.
So from the notion of a 'foundation discipline' it seems reasonable to then talk of 'applying' theory to practice.

Now leaving aside the question of whether this is really an appropriate conception of the theory-practice relationship in medicine and engineering, my concern is whether it is appropriate in the case of the practice of teaching and the foundation discipline of psychology. I would argue that teachers do not need to 'take account of' psychological 'laws' in the same way as doctors and engineers appear to need to take account of biochemical and physical laws.

Before developing this further I should point out that the term 'theory' itself needs explication. It can refer either to 'products' expressed through causal explanations about law-like regularities or to the 'framework' that underlies these products (I shall say more about the nature of this later).

There are a number of problems with psychological theories in the sense of 'products'. Their validity, for example, is questionable. As Egan (1984) points out psychological theories modelled on the theories of natural science manifest 'phenomena insensitivity'. The methods used may be scientific but at the cost of distorting and narrowing the phenomena of study to the extent that the resulting theory has little explanatory value outside the experimental situation. Second, there is the problem of usefulness. Are such theories telling us something empirically necessary about the world or something subject to cultural contingency and local variation? If it is the former, there is little that education can do anyhow but if it is the latter then the theories have a limited usefulness given the nature of education as a practical activity.

The nature of education also has a significant bearing if psychological theories are seen as 'frameworks' rather than 'products'. As a practical activity education is about what 'ought to be done' rather than what is the case. Teaching is concerned with bringing about desired change rather than seeking truths about the world. The kind of 'framework' which underlies psychology, particularly scientific psychology, is not one which is appropriate to a normative, prescriptive activity such as education and teaching, although presumably it is to the activity of producing the laws and causal explanations of scientific psychology.

Thus whether one considers theory as 'products' or theory as 'framework' it is difficult to see what teachers need to 'take account of' or 'apply' in psychological theories. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) point out in education and psychology we have two different realms of discourse - the one practical, the other theoretical. Talking of 'applying' the latter to the former, of improving practice, through the 'application'of psychological theory is both inappropriate and unhelpful.

A consequence of the application model has been to see theory and practice as somehow distinct. The metaphor of application suggests two distinct entities which have separate origins and identity. Yet as Schon (1983), has argued there is, in effect, a 'theory' in practice which is generated through the interchange between action, understanding and change in practical activity.

This would seem to suggest, therefore, that practice is not atheoretical and that theory is generated through practice. Theory is embedded in practice, indeed it structures the experience of practice. Teaching, for example, is not conducted in a theoretical vacuum but consists of 'informed' action ie. actions which are reflected upon and explainable or to put it another way, 'theorised about'.

What, therefore, is the nature of the theory which structures educational practice? To answer this, we must return to my earlier point about the nature of education as a practical activity. Education is concerned with bringing about desirable ends through desirable means within particular cultural contexts. The theory is therefore one which appropriately structures this practical activity. It is more in the nature of theory as a 'framework' than theory as a 'product' and in this sense, therefore, is an amalgam of skills, contextual knowledge, beliefs, understandings, etc about the nature of educational activity.

Teachers carry round a theory of this kind 'in their head' which is manifested in their actions. It enables them to function as practitioners since without it they would literally not be practising but engaging in random and purposeless behaviour. The theory allows them to decide what practice means and thus to make sense of what they are doing. The theory, therefore, is quite clearly not to do with scientific laws or empirical regularites about the nature of the world but what it means for people to learn effectively and what it means to teach in order to achieve those ends.

At this point, let me pause and consider some possible criticisms to the argument I have been putting forward. Theory in the sense I have been using it could be seen to be virtually indistinguishable from 'folk-wisdom' or 'recipe-knowledge'. It also appears to be a rather conservative notion - if teachers already have a theory which structures their practice then what more needs to be said or done? Alternatively, can we ever distinguish whether theory is right or wrong - if we can't then I seem to be advocating irrationality.

The content of this theory is skills, contextual and professional knowledge about teaching and beliefs and understandings about the nature of educational practice. It goes beyond 'folk-wisdom' although the latter may be contained in it. In essence, it is an informed and reflective awareness. Now clearly, it may vary in its degree of articulation, elaboration and refinement. It would be naive to assume that this awareness is found to the same degree in all teachers. A variety of factors, some internal to the individual, others external (for example, organisational constraints)will play their part in limiting awareness. Since we can evaluate practice in terms of quality and since we can talk sensibly of improving practice, intervention in terms of elaborating and refining practice based theory is therefore also possible.

If practitioners 'get stuck' and cannot resolve their practice problems then the theory about practice is not 'meshing' with the practice itself - what the practitioner expects to happen isn't actually happening. Within this 'problem' situation the theory is unable to help. In this sense, therefore, the theory can be 'wrong'. The answer here, however, would not be to turn to the laws of scientific psychology but to 'work on' theory, to change the framework of knowledge, skills, beliefs, attitudes etc in order to change awareness and thus change practice. Theory can therefore be wrong but both it and practice are open to the possibility of change. The 'framework' can be changed, practice is experienced differently. It is a process of accommodation which allows the problems of practice to be coped with.

This way of seeing the theory-practice relationship does have salience for us as adult educators concerned with teaching teachers about adult learning with the aim of helping them to improve their practice and teach adults more effectively. What we can work with most directly in the classroom is not their practice but their 'theory'.

This takes me back to my starting point about psychology as the foundation discipline in the study of adult learning and teaching. Given the relationship between theory and practice it is clear that scientific psychology cannot provide such a foundation. The kind of theory that is its concern either in terms of 'products' or 'frameworks' is not that which is appropriate to education, particularly adult education.

The conception I am putting forward is that of theory and practice informing and enriching each other. The key is 'reflective awareness' which emerges out of this interaction and is the framework which guides and structures practice. As we have seen this 'reflective awareness' needs 'working on', it needs to be refined and improved - that I believe is our main task as teachers and curriculum designers.

Now to do this we need to go beyond practice and practice-based theory. It would be foolish to ignore the 'formal' theory contained in foundation disciplines since we need this as resource or 'sounding-board' for the improvement and refinement of practice-based theory. On the other hand, we have to recognise that formal theories can be differentiated and that some have a greater affinity and paradigmatic force for practice based theory than others.

As an example of this, I would instance the kinds of theory usually associated with psychotherapy. I recognise that there is an apparent contradiction here. Having rejected the theories of scientific psychology on the grounds that they are inappropriate to a practical activity such as education one would seem to be substituting theories which appear to be equally inappropriate. The point is, however, that the inappropriateness is more apparent than real given that the overlap between education and therapy is now widely accepted. The best known example of this is, of course, Rogers who has written extensively on education (1967,1969), and considers himself to be both an educator and a therapist. He clearly sees certain kinds of education as having much in common with therapy. but he is by no means alone in this. Freud, for example, likened the analyst to the educator in the sense that both sought to stimulate insight, awareness and understanding. Stevens (1983) sees psychoanalytic therapy as akin to educational practice, since both are concerned with elucidating meaning. Lacan (1977) has stressed the interpretive role of analysis in its concern with insight and the surfacing of the unconscious rather than cure. With personal construct theory Kelly (1963) has produced a theory which although orginally based in therapy has, nonetheless, through its emphasis on the individual's construction of meaning and knowledge provided important insights for education.

Of course, it could be said that therapeutic theories tell us nothing of value for education because they are about curing people with mental problems. I'm not entirely sure about this - I suspect that this point of view is based on a misleading medical model. Even so, however, therapy is not _essentially_ about the curing of mental disease but is about helping people become more aware of themselves. By so doing, people might also resolve their mental problems but the essential point is that there is _more_ to therapy than effecting cure.

It is this 'more' which makes therapy-derived theories relevant to education. Unlike the theories of scientific psychology, these are prescriptive, value-laden, normative and action-oriented. As I pointed out earlier this too is the nature of education. They are about the whole person not just a particular aspect of the person. They are idiographic rather than nomothetic. Their approach is hermeneutic ie they seek to interpret rather than explain and predict. They recognise the existence of human consciousness and therefore the reflexive character of their theories. Like education, the end-point is a kind of _person_ rather than the 'cognition' or 'behaviour' of scientific psychology.

Now I am not suggesting that we should convert our courses into psychoanalytic or Rogerian training sessions nor am I suggesting that the theoretical 'products' of scientific psychology should be totally discarded. It may be that it is important to know these things for their own sake, or because it helps sharpen up the critical faculties or a whole variety of other reasons. Equally, there is a place for the teaching of the 'frameworks' of scientific psychology, for example behaviourism if only because they are so prevalent and deep-seated and affect practice albeit in an often unrecognised way.

What I am suggesting is that if our courses are designed to help teachers 'grapple with' and resolve the problems of practice and if to do that they need to refine their practice-based theory, then therapy-derived theories, given their nature, can help achieve this. At this stage I see this help as being that of refining or 'reviewing' practitioners' frameworks. Extending and deepening reflective awareness, facilitating the process of improving insight and understanding in an action-context requires teaching with a congruent approach and a relevant content. As I have indicated, I do not believe the theories of scientific psychology fit either of these criteria and therefore they are not an appropriate foundation discipline. "If we want practitioners to be reflective, critical and self-directing in the world of practice, then we must create conditions through teaching for them to be reflective, critical and self-directing in the world of the classroom" (Usher and Bryant, 1986). Therapy derived theories are more likely to help us create those conditions since by their nature they are not a foundation but a supporting discipline.

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SUBJECT-BASED RESEARCH

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This paper purports not to produce answers, but to ask questions. We are dealing with a much-neglected field of enquiry, and it is vital as a first stage, to decide what the questions are which need answering. Moreover - and this is symptomatic of the whole area of enquiry - it is not appropriate for me (as a specialist in one subject area) to dare to comment upon the short-term quality or the longer-term value of any other field. I can speak only in institutional terms.

We are addressing ourselves to the research activities of subject-based academics employed in university extra-mural departments, and trying to extract some generalisations about their role and their activities.

1. Some initial generalisations

(i) All EMDs are multi-disciplinary; only in rare instances do departments have more than one, or maybe two, specialists in the same subject area. So - unless extra-departmental relationships are established - 'team' research is impossible. And this flies in the face of much present practice, and the implication of UGC statements about 'strong' (often meaning 'large') departments or schools.

(ii) Whereas the university world puts research before teaching (note the patterns of promotion, and the UGC's assessment of research not teaching) most extra-mural departments give teaching a higher priority. In itself, this can affect the nature of subject-based research in EMDs: time available, the absence of external examinations, the developing curriculum - all these lead to a high proportion of research linked closely to a teaching programme. Similarly, there may be evidence that local-study based curricula give rise to 'local studies' figuring large in research programmes.

(iii) Each EMD relates differently to its parent university; there are many different degrees of centrality and there are thus many ranges of conditions wherein research takes place, affecting time available, the annual cycle of work, funding, bench space, study leave etc.

2. The importance of research

The preceding section implies some muddles - not in itself a bad thing. But the time has come to establish a framework within which considerable levels of activity and considerable achievements may be expressed and recognised. I do not here refer to the value of research in its own right.

(i) It is particularly important that the external (UGC, CVCP, DES et al) perception of the role and function of EM staff be clarified - there is a mythology to be dispelled.

(ii) This relates closely to the external perception of the function and value of university adult education as an activity.

(iii) The recognition of the value of subject-based research is a crucial factor in getting the EMD-university relationship 'right'. This is essential for broad political reasons, for the good of adult education within higher education; and is of particular importance now because, should DES policy not change, within two years definable DES support for EM staff posts will disappear.

(iv) Despite the attached UGC statement, as the distinction between the EMD and the rest of university becomes blurred (as a result of DES policy) so will the importance of a high extra-mural research profile increase.

3. My enquiry

My - as it turned out naive - assumption was that each department would have to hand a prepared statement for its own university on its research activities, to be submitted as part of the university's submission to the UGC. I thought that these may be published as publicist collection by UCACE. It transpired that:

(i) In a few cases this was so:

(ii) In some cases, non-selective lists of publications (not quite the same thing) had been submitted - the bulk of which had been 'edited out'.

(iii) Some departments' subject specialists had recorded their work as individuals via the appropriate faculty:

(iv) Some departments - mainly the larger ones with sub-divisions - found cognizance taken of some of their work and the rest ignored;

(v) Some departments had not been invited to take part in the exercise; of these, some submitted and others did not.

4. In conclusion

(i) There is no need to standardise the position of departments vis a vis their universities; but there is the need for each department to be clear about their own position, particularly in the light of continuing UGC evaluation and the changing policy of the DES;

(ii) There is a need to achieve a higher profile for the considerable volume of subject-based research being conducted in EMDs;

(iii) SCUTREA should consider the institutional factors hampering or encouraging such research programmes; plainly these will have a great deal to do with (i) above. I would simply quote 3 directors here:

(a) 'My colleagues make their greatest impact in the university via the academic faculty stucture'

(b) (significantly a recent appointment from an internal department) 'research can best move forward in "clusters" of interest - my biggest "cluster" in this department is two'

(c) 'this department may be described as a university within a university'

(iv) Data needs to be collected, but

(a) there is an enormous problem of format

(b) there is a problem of definition of 'extra-mural department' and 'extra-mural staff'

(c) there is the need to recognise that much adult education is conducted via units with no academic or research base. They will be anxious about damage to their reputation.

(v) UCACE would like to consider with SCUTREA the possiblity of establishing a computer base of research activities, provided such an activity could be shown to have value.

(vi) At the heart of the matter is that referred to in (i) above. The DES (HMI) have alway assessed teaching and programmes; never research. But their control over the role of FT staff is changing. And the UGC are moving into assessment, initially via research. Where does this leave the non-faculty based extra-mural subject specialist?

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From the Chairman
Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer FRS

W Forster Esq MA
Secretary
Universities' Council for Adult and
Continuing Education
Department of Adult Education
University of Leicester
University Road
LEICESTER LE1 7RH

13 June 1986

Dear Forster

As a result of a number of enquiries which we have received I thought that I should write to you to clarify the position regarding adult education and the UGC's research selectivity exercise.

You will no doubt know that the UGC has recently written to universities announcing their grant for 1986/87 and giving assessments of their research profiles as submitted in their response to the UGC's planning letter (Circular letter 12/85). Research ratings were given to universities by departmental cost centres, including Education (cost centre 37), and were expressed in terms of "better than average", "average" and "below average". Misunderstandings have arisen because some Heads of adult education departments have assumed that the research rating for cost centre 37 applied to their Department as well as to the Education Department in their University.

In fact, no assessment or judgement of research in adult education departments was made as part of the UGC's research selectivity exercise. Certainly, many of the research profiles for cost centre 37 submitted by universities included a profile for adult education, along with education, but the research described was generally related to the academic disciplines of individual members of staff rather than the professional study of the education of adults. Thus a typical profile described a piece of work in history, one in biology, one in industrial relations and one in geology. It seemed neither sensible nor practicable for the Committee to make a judgement, first because each submission would have had to be considered by a number of different subject sub-committees as appropriate and, secondly, because in most cases any judgement could only have been of discrete pieces of often unconnected research by individuals rather than of a body of "adult education" research.

When a suitable opportunity arises, we shall certainly seek to explain to universities that the research rating for cost centre 37 did not include adult education. Meanwhile, it may be helpful to you to have this letter in answering any queries which you may receive from adult education colleagues.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

Yours sincerely

Peter Swinnerton-Dyer

EVALUATION RESEARCH IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

Keith Percy
University of Lancaster

The breadth of the papers which follow shows clearly the frequency with which 'evaluation' is called for and the broad range of phenomena in adult and continuing education to which evaluation research is directed. There is talk of the evaluation of policy, of projects and of innovation. There is curriculum evaluation, evaluation of teachers and teaching, evaluation of learning and what is learned, evaluation of students and student performance. Institutional effectiveness, organisational processes and individual job performance can all be evaluated, or it is said they can be evaluated. And so on. However, as the following papers make clear, evaluation research is often commissioned because people and institutions want to use the existence of an evaluation and its outcomes for reasons other than a dispassionate interest in its findings. Thus evaluation research is overtly political in its nature and evaluation researchers cannot function successfully unless they take into account the political context of their endeavours and the constraints which these may impose upon their professional commitment to pursue 'scientific' canons of objectivity and truth.

It is evidently rational for policy-makers, project sponsors, heads of organisations, funding bodies and even teachers and students to be concerned that there should be evaluation. It is the formal way of asking such apparently simple questions as 'is it successful?', 'is it working?', 'what is being achieved?', 'what is it costing?', 'is it worth what it is costing?', 'what are the benefits and outcomes?', 'are we better off than before?', 'what difference has it made?'. They are all rational questions, which are not always asked as often as they should be, and which show a concern for proper, and professional, practice.

To rational questions, however, there may not be rationally achievable answers. We may want to know if an innovation or policy has been successful, but we may not have the time, resources and access to data which would enable us to find out. Above all, we may not have the methodology, or be able to achieve the conceptual clarity about our goals, which would enable us to find out. An evaluation might seek to show that people's needs have been satisfied or their quality of life improved but any of the methodologies available - and the conceptual definitions which lie behind them - are open to challenge. It is possible to assert that there is much in evaluation research, and in educational research as a whole, which in unknowable on these grounds alone.

If - as David Jones in one of the following papers argues - evaluation consists of giving a process or outcome a value, then evaluation research can be seen to be inherently political. Whose scale of values is to be applied? Who decides which values are to be the values which count - the dominant ones? Which criteria of success are to be accepted as those which are relevant? Which set of interests is being served in the making of these decisions, and which sets of interests are being ignored, undermined or down-graded?

Evaluation methodology is not, of course, in itself value or interest free. Explicit or implicit, there are methodological frameworks or theories which lie behind all methodology. Theories of society and models of human behaviour and interaction inform all evaluation research and help to explain why evaluators choose participant observation, unstructured interviews, surveys capable of quantification or any of the other methodological modes. When researchers assert that they prefer 'qualitative' research methods they are as often saying something about their own view of people as about research methodology. For example - to take the personal example - I become increasingly aware that I interpret the world normally as a conflict situation in which any social process can be seen as a competition (usually institutionalised) between interested parties and vested interests, urging on each other their own ideologies and legitimations. It follows then that in any evaluation research I am liable to interpret my data (indeed, am likely to collect this data in the first place) in terms of the power relationships between participants and the interaction and compromises between their ideologies. Yet, there is a possible view of society which regards institutions and social relations as more or less in equilibrium. From this perspective evaluation research might be likened to regular trips to the car mechanic or the dentist - a preventative exercise to check that things are functioning as they should be and to identify small adjustments or treatments that have to be made to processes or practices to maintain the equilibrium.

Whatever view we take on whether evalution is possible, what methods are preferable, which examples of evaluation are better than others and why educational researchers shoulder the trials and tribulations of carrying out evaluation, it is not contestable that evaluation research exists, that it is a social phenomenon. Apparently, it is a phenomenon that is growing and becoming more institutionalised in the world of adult and continuing education. Thus, the existence of evaluatory processes, whatever their efficiency, is used in educational debate and in political debate about education as an offensive or defensive weapon, sometimes as a source of mystification. We can all acknowledge that there is in existence a social construct called 'evaluation' and that educationalists, administrators and others use it. But administrators will differ from researchers in the degrees of certainty which they will ascribe to the outcomes of evaluation research. In the practical world of adult education politics 'innovators' will defend themselves by saying that they are being or have been 'evaluated'; practitioners will feel threatened by something called 'evaluation'; and decision-makers will delay decisions on the grounds that 'evaluation' is taking place (a form of educational 'sub judice').

This introduction concludes by underlining the large responsibilities which fall onto the shoulders of evaluation researchers. The responsiblities are not of their choosing and stem from the political nature of their work which this essay has sought to exemplify. It is remarkable that the intelligent and well-educated people who hold power and influence practice in the world of adult education (and of education generally) find it necessary to believe in the construct which they have termed 'evaluation'. That is to say, they often appear to believe that educational practice - a hugely complex set of interacting phenomena - can be reduced to relatively simple black and white questions to which evaluators can find the black and white answers. Examples of the problems and responsibilities which this causes for evaluation researchers are plentiful and some are reflected in the papers which follow. Administrators and politicians will not necessarily read long research reports or bear in mind the academic caveats with which any 'conclusion' is hedged around. Journalists and publicists will look for the one line summary of what has been 'found' and the more dramatic the better. However, the limited opportunities so far devised for communicating research mean that it is the journalists' one-liners which often become the received knowledge of practitioners, students and ordinary people. The fewer hostages to fortune, then, which the evaluation researcher gives the better; a final but all-important responsibility lies in the wording of any reports and in the choice of dissemination modes. The classic minatory example comes, in fact, from the University of Lancaster ten years ago when colleagues shot to overnight fame and notoriety because of the way in which a methodologically complex piece of research into primary school teaching styles was blown up in the media, at the time of the so-called 'Great Debate' in education, as purporting to have demonstrated that formal teaching methods were more 'successful' than informal in the primary school classroom. Adult and continuing education is not likely ever to attract the same kind of media interest, but the principles of researcher caution and responsibility remain the same.

EVALUATION IN ADULT EDUCATION: SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

David J Jones
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In the September 1982 (Vol.14) edition of 'Studies in Adult Education' Stephen Brookfield published an article called "Evaluation Models in Adult Education". In this paper he presented an overview of various models for educational evaluation and made comparisons between evaluation as practised in the U.K. and the U.S.A. This in itself was instructive but what was more revealing was the implicit assumption that different approaches to evaluative work were informed by different value systems. The piece thus raised many questions about the nature of evaluation and about the assumptions which underpin the design of evaluation procedures. I was consequently moved to attempt an analysis of the concept of evaluation and to attempt to generate a theoretical model which could inform the development of evaluation procedures.

The arguments set out below rest on two premises. They assert that:

a) Evaluation is concerned with the establishment of worth or value;

b) Values are relative.

Whilst the paper is principally concerned with evaluation in Adult Education, much of what is said is applicable to other areas of education as well as to the evaluation of research.

The relativity of values.

Values are relative. The value of any educational activity cannot be established in isolation; it can only be established in relation to something else. This means that evaluation is concerned with making comparisons, with demonstrating that something is better or worse than something else. The comparator, the "something else", can be real or imaginary. Evaluation is a comparative exercise.

One can compare one educational enterprise with another in order to show which is better.

Alternatively one can compare an educational activity, say, the provision of a particular Adult Education Centre, with itself four or five or 'x' years ago to see if standards have improved or deteriorated over a period of time.

Or one can compare an educational enterprise with a theoretical (imagined) model in order to see if it is as good or as bad as the model suggests is possible. One could, for instance, try to find out if a particular educational activity, say a psychology course, in fact achieved what it intended to achieve. One would be evaluating performance relative to stated intention.

The inconstancy of values.

Values in education are not constant. They change over time and can vary from one place to another, even from one person to another.

What is now considered to be of high educational value may not have been so considered a hundred years ago and may not be considered valuable in a hundred years time.

What is considered of high value in the United Kingdom may not be considered of high value in the United States.

What one educationalist considers to be of high value may not coincide with the value system of another educationalist.

It is clear that in certain societies at certain times certain kinds of educational achievement are accorded higher value and often earn higher rewards than other kinds of educational achievement. Educational values, like other values, are informed by philosophical and political considerations. They seem to be subjective rather than objective.

The context of evaluation.

As a consequence of this it should be recognised that the **'context'** in which an evaluation takes place is significant.

The question of who decides on what is to be given high or low value is clearly central to any evaluation procedure. It will be difficult to prevent personal subjective value systems from influencing outcomes.

The political and socio-economic context in which an evaluation takes place can influence the assumptions on which judgements are based. It is difficult to ignore prevailing social norms.

The expectations of those commissioning, or overseeing, a piece of evaluative research may also affect outcomes.

When carrying out evaluative research it is important to recognise these possible influences and constraints and to try to mitigate their effects. When reading the results of evaluative research it is important to contextualise them and to identify the source of the value system on which they are based.

The 'ad hoc' nature of evaluation procedures.

Because educational values are not constant it may be best to consider evaluative procedures as ***ad hoc***.

Value systems relating to one evaluation cannot necessarily be transferred to another.

The results of one evaluation are not necessarily applicable to another situation, no matter how similar it may be. Unlike other forms of research it may be that the results of evaluative research are not generalisable.

Different evaluation procedures need to be generated for different educational enterprises. There are, of course, questions about who, in a particular educational activity, should be involved in designing procedures for the evaluation of that activity. However, no matter who designs them, the methods of evaluation and the criteria to be used should be seen as relating only to the activity for which they were designed.

Identifying the focus of evaluation.

Questions about how one identifies the phenomenon that is being evaluated are both difficult and important. An evaluator needs to decide how to recognise a particular trait or behaviour before deciding on how to evaluate it.

If, for instance, one wanted to evaluate the degree of learning in a particular setting one would first have to decide how one was going to identify and quantify learning. The same difficulties would arise should one wish to assess other behaviours. Consider, for instance, how one might identify creative ability in order to evaluate its development among the members of a creative art class.

It is clear that many concepts we take for granted need to be defined before they can be evaluated. Moreover they must be defined in ways which render them recognisable and open to investigation.

The identification of appropriate criteria.

Criteria on which an evaluation is based are chosen for their appropriateness. If the evaluation is to be taken seriously the choice of criteria will have to be justified. The choice of criteria will be influenced by considerations of where, when, why and on behalf of whom the evaluation is being carried out. Criteria may be formulated as questions, like the following;

> *Are more students attending the centre this year than last?*
>
> *Are participants in the group beginning to take charge of their own learning?*

Did the training course affect the way in which participants behaved in their work?

Criteria can refer to behaviour which takes place after a course as well as to what happens during a course. The effects of a course may not be evident or appreciated until some time after it has ended.

Whether or not a participant has liked or enjoyed an educational activity is not necessarily a valid criterion.

Evidence for evaluations.

Having established the criteria to be used it becomes necessary to identify the sort of evidence which will be acceptable as a basis for deciding whether or not those criteria have been met. It should be possible to show that the chosen evidence really does demonstrate that a given criterion has or has not been achieved. This is often not the case.

Student enrolments are often taken as indicative of the success of a particular form of educational provision. They may provide evidence of good enrolment procedures but provide no evidence of the extent or quality of learning taking place in the centre.

Answers to timed written examinations are often taken as evidence of academic ability. They may provide no more than evidence of an ability to do timed written examinations.

There are only three sources of evidence for evaluating an educational enterprise. They are;

> *(i) Evidence from observing what takes place. (The term 'observing' here denotes input through all the senses, not just the eyes. It is not difficult to envisage situations where, say, touch or hearing provide useful evidence for an evaluation.)*

(ii) Evidence from examination of any results of a particular activity (results of an experiment, a piece of woodwork, answers to mathematical problems, a painting).

(iii) Verbal evidence,either written or oral. This may come from conversations or interviews with those involved, from essays or other written communication, or from answers to questionnaires.

It is the task of those carrying out the evaluation to decide on the most appropriate source(s) of evidence and to devise the best methods for its collection.

The following example may help to illustrate some of the above points.

AN EXAMPLE.

If one wanted to evaluate a political education course, There are at least two approaches which one could take.

(a) One could assess how much students had learned about political systems, about government or pressure groups. One could go further and try to assess a student's grasp of political theory. and their ability to apply it. At the highest level one could assess the ability to develop political theories from a study of political activity.

(b) Alternatively one could decide that success should be measured in terms of how many course members became involved in political action after attending the course.

Suppose one decided to adopt the second course of action; to evaluate the course in terms of the number of participants who become involved in political action. The criterion would ask whether or not the students (or a majority of the students) had or had not become involved in political action.The next step would be to consider questions related to the nature and collection of evidence.

What can legitimately be considered to be 'political action'?

How can these different forms of political action be recognised?

How can one ascertain whether or not a course member has been involved in political action? (What is acceptable evidence?)

How much evidence is needed to make a convincing evaluation?

Who will collect the evidence?

When will the evidence be collected?

How will the evidence be collected?

What is to be done with the evidence once it has been collected?

Who will order and present the evidence and draw conclusions from it?.

The answers to these questions will inform the design of an evaluation procedure. It is not always possible to take these steps in sequence. Decisions about the way in which the evidence is to be used may inform decisions about how the evidence is to be collected. In evaluating research projects one would wish to decide whether or not questions like those above had all been dealt with satisfactorily.

Student assessment.

So far we have been concerned with evaluation in a general sense. There is, however, a convention, not always adhered to,that the term 'evaluation' is used when referring to courses and the term 'assessment' is used when referring to student ability. Hence, one 'evaluates' a diploma course but one assesses the ability of diploma students.

Assessments may be carried out for a number of reasons. They may,for instance, form part of a course evaluation; one may wish to know how students have developed their abilities in order to evaluate the success or failure of an educational course.

On the other hand they may form a sort of filter to decide who goes on to the next rung of an educational ladder. Public examinations operate in this way. They are used to decide who will go on to higher education and to ascertain who will be allowed to enter particular jobs or professions.

As with evaluation procedures, assessment procedures must be designed with care to ensure that they assess what they purport to assess. Quite often questions of student honesty impinge upon questions of appropriateness. Attention has already been drawn to the limitations of the timed written examination. This mode of assessment, however, is still widely used because it is felt to be the most successful in avoiding cheating.

Assessment procedures, like evaluation procedures, must identify what is being assessed and address themselves to the nature of and the collection of appropriate evidence. Assessors must be clear about what they are assessing. Concepts like 'intelligence' and 'creativity' are problematic. It is often suggested that intelligence tests do no more than measure someone's ability to do intelligence tests and there is little agreement about the nature of creativity. It is often necessary to arrive at a working definition of one's terms before embarking on the design of an assessment procedure. This usually requires a search of the available literature to find out both what has been written about the subject and to acquaint oneself with research findings.

It is always worth identifying the assumptions which underlie many systems of assessment. Remember that possessing an 'O'level in, say History, means only that at a particular time, on a particular day, in a pre-arranged place, a candidate was able, in three hours, to answer four from a selection of questions about a previously agreed period of history to the satisfaction of examiners appointed by the examining body. There are questions about whether this tells us anything at all about the candidate's ability as an historian?

Conclusion

What we are left with at the end of this analysis is a framework which asserts that values are not constant and are established comparatively. As a consequence of this it is thought that it is important to recognise and acknowledge the context in which an evaluation takes place. It is suggested that evaluation procedures are best considered as ad hoc. Unlike other forms of research the results of evaluative research are not usually generalisable.

The importance of identifying clearly just what is being evaluated is stressed as is the importance of identifying appropriate criteria. The sources of evidence on which the evaluation is to be based are identified.

Perhaps the most important questions have not been considered. Who carries out any evaluation is a central issue and in adult education one can detect a preference for participatory evaluative procedures. In addressing the questions about when an evaluation procedure takes place one can similarly detect a preference for formative, on-going, evaluations. Timing is clearly important and there is a place for summative evaluations. Whilst one must acknowledge that the results of an educational activity may not be evident until some time after the event, one must question the value of a procedure which can persuade you only that the course you ran ten years ago was really quite successful.

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO METHODOLOGY

D J Alexander
University of Edinburgh

I was asked to spend some of my time on the politics of research methodology. I will review some positions on this question which will be fairly familiar but try to relate these to some examples of research, as broadly defined by John Nisbet, which I think illustrate at least some of the issues.

I think that the political stances and values of the researchers do influence both the choice of topic and the decisions on methodology. To use our own recent experience, my political stance and theoretical background push me continually to see as a central question in educational research (as well as in active educational reform and training) the quality and nature of the curriculum which is being made effectively accessible or inaccessible to which groups in society and why. This position informed our approach to the Scottish Study of Community Education and Leisure and Recreation (Alexander, Leach and Steward: 1984). It influences our methodology in that, for example, historical evidence and analysis were required in order to understand the nature of current practice in community education and it was not considered sufficient to rely on survey and questionnaire methods. We made our position explicit in what we considered to be fairly restrained language: 'But if the Community Education Services are to establish more developmental and educational structures, the creation of effective access for all members of the community to a more cognitive and intellectually challenging curriculum is essential. If there are valuable areas of knowledge to which only some sections of the community have traditionally had access it is not "elitist" to suggest that those areas of knowledge are equally valuable to those who have traditionally not enjoyed such access' (Alexander, Leach and Steward, 1984: 445). If we had been less restrained we might have said, in answer to the charge being levelled against us by a number of Community Education professionals, that more cognitive curricula, not to mention the researchers themselves, are elitist, that the curriculum in community education was cognitively emasculated and in Cobbett's terms part of the 'comforting system' - the incessant persuasion to 'be quiet' (Williams, 1960:18).

In these respects we made our position explicit and avoided a facade of objectivity. This avoidance and the degree of explicitness does of course bring its problems in terms of the audiences one wishes to convince so that a political analysis of dominant groups and pressures influences the way in which research is presented and the methodologies that are employed. These politics and one's own values influence the choice of method as well as the nature of the topic and some would say how could it be otherwise if one is concerned to see theory as comprehensive rather than fragmented and discrete. But we employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques and we were influenced by Parlett and Hamilton's views on illuminative research and triangulation in relation to method. This was not only because of the nature of the audiences that we wished to convince but also because of the intrinsic nature of the topic. For example if one wishes to have evidence on social class and gender factors in the patterns of participation, a small collection of life-histories relating social class and gender to the educational socio-economic opportunity structure may not be sufficient, so we employed a survey questionnaire method for users as well more open and qualitative methods. This quantitative evidence has been extremely useful in demonstrating both expressed and latent demand for adult basic and general education and the pitiful responses in terms of resources and emphasis in community education and further education. Some of the data also suprised us and led to other lines of enquiry.

Choice of methodology then is affected by the nature of topic, sponsors and their purposes, the researchers' values and the wish to convince various audiences for which various reports of the research are required at various levels of presentation and emphasis. There is often a major time and resource problem in producing such a variety of reports. It may well be that research and evaluation is seen and paid for as it relates to policy-making in which case method and presentation are influenced by the policy-makers directly or by the researchers' perceptions of policy-makers and their (the researchers') political analysis of the position of the policy-makers in the socio-economic structure. There is frequently insufficient information or analysis for the latter to be accurate.

The audiences include the participants in the research if they are not to be seen as purely 'objects' and they need to be convinced of the integrity of the researchers' values and purposes if they are to co-operate. It is unfortunately a common situation that participants may have little power in the implementation of findings and this is one factor which has influenced researchers towards the adoption of more participatory and qualitative techniques in the hope that the nature of methodology will result in an increase in knowledge and power on the part of the participants seen as 'subjects'. I support this view but it does imply that the researcher must have a level of political responsibility and analysis of a very high order. In many politically oppressive situations the results of the application of participatory methodologies may be literally a matter of life or death for participants - and the researcher having got the political analysis wrong may literally 'fly away' which is not a creditable function of the 'intellectual'. This may apply for example to interpretative and participatory research into the development of curricula for trade unionists who are frequently one of the first groups to be arrested in politically oppressive conditions as in South Africa and Poland at present. The choice of interpretative and participatory methodology is intrinsically correct for the research area of curriculum development in workers' education. Political responsibility lies with both researchers and workers but they had better get their political analysis right. This affirms the importance of relating methodology and research area to an historical and political understanding of the dominant socio-economic forces in operation. Another area to which this analysis applies is the type of research and evaluation in agricultural planning and extension which hopes to place more knowledge and power over allocation of resources and prices in the hands of small farmers.

If the results of participatory and more qualitative research are the generation of thinking and a spirit of enquiry, as John Nisbet puts it, rather than action on the implications of the research because such action is politically blocked, it is likely that the thinking and spirit of enquiry may result in other forms of action by the participants in an attempt to remove the blockage. Consciousness raising, learning and awareness through research and the illuminative methods employed seem educationally unassailable and virtuous. The historical context in which such work takes place may make them less so. The historical and socio-economic context then is central to the consideration of methodology in educational research if both intellectual integrity and political responsibility are to be maintained.

The purposes and intentions of individuals are in any case embedded in these contexts and in Ralph Ruddock's terms adult educators have tended to avoid in their research the larger issues from which the research area, however limited, may be derived. He therefore argues for comprehensive theory and understanding (Ruddock: 1981). Is there any question about this? If not what are the political and methodological implications?

There has been much vicious interchange between supporters of quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Smith 1981). A common assumption is that 'number crunchers' are right wing and the 'story tellers' left wing but perhaps this assumption needs to questioned as we recall the politics and tactics involved in the choice of methodology and the perceived need to convince particular audiences. Briefly, the attack on the quantitative 'realist' position is that it leaves out human intention; it argues that researchers can be neutral observers standing apart from an independently existing reality and can treat human beings as 'objects'. And it sometimes claims to be able to discover laws and principles on a natural/physical science model. The qualitative/interpretative supporters see society as being produced by human beings and as subject to our intentions and purposes. We therefore have a different relationship with our subject matter than physical/natural scientists as we are the subjects of our own enquiry and so cannot be neutral and detached observers. Different approaches and methodologies are implied and the purposes of researchers and their political stance always have consequences for choice of topic and method.

It is suggested that the debate between the fact-finding and interpretative schools may dissolve in application to the issue and the topic so that methods become complementary. We merely have to look for which methods are useful for the issues and how far we use methods which grasp and understand the intentions and experience of the subjects. But this resolution does leave aside questions, for example, concerning the unity of knowledge; judgements, which may well be related to political values and purposes, about what is good and bad research and methodology; and judgements about what counts as legitimate knowledge and why. Smith (1983) asks whether there can be two sets of criteria for good and bad research - one qualitative and the other quantitative. Can a qualitative piece be judged on quantitative criteria and vice versa? This is politically important as judgements may be made on the methods chosen by individual researchers as to who gets which jobs in the academic community; who gets which research projects to carry out; and who becomes powerful professionally so influencing future appointments and research methodologies employed.

It is interesting that the first two Nottingham Adult Education research Reports (Fletcher 1983: Alexander, Leach and Steward 1984) adopted different approaches and methodologies. A caricature of the methodologies might be that Colin Fletcher opted to tell a story and details a case-study of Sutton Centre. It is easily read. It is a personal account rather than a 'scientific' study of occurrences, arguments, ideas and action. The intention is to allow meanings to emerge from the text and to allow readers to make their own judgements of the 'messages', perceptions and insight which derive directly from the story and the drama as presented. In our Scottish study we opted for a mix of methodologies in which we could claim some 'objectivity' and authority deriving from the methodology in, for example, the evidence on participation in community education and leisure and recreation. In Colin Fletcher's study I was looking for empirical evidence on the nature and pattern of participation and how far the Sutton Centre had shielded adult education during a period of cuts. What were the politics of these choices of methodology? Was it the political values of the researchers? Was it perceived pressures from sponsors and the academic community? Was it differing perceived needs for credibility with different audiences? Were the differences related to the nature of the topic? I am not sure of the answers to these questions but when we take on research it is important to have them in mind and to debate them as explicitly and honestly as we can. For example a judgement that quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary and may be resolved by the nature of the topic or issue is not yet demonstrated. The question of our differing purposes and intentions is not eaily resolved but they should not be obscured.

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CALLED TO ACCOUNT: EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OBJECTIVITY

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1. Introduction

In this paper I wish to examine a particular issue relating to evaluation research, namely that of the politics of research, centreing on the issue of accountability. I will begin by outlining some underlying assumptions that I make, and then illustrate the problematic nature of evaluation research with respect to the issue of accountability by reference to a case study and then discuss the implications of this examination for the use of evaluation research in the study of the education of adults.

To begin with, then, I wish to make explicit some underlying assumptions concerning evaluation research. Firstly, evaluation is always political in nature. According to House, evaluation - lacking certainty of proof or conclusiveness - is fundamentally an act of persuasion, which cannot be dissociated from political beliefs or ideology. He writes:

> "Evaluation is always derived from biased origins. When someone wants to defend or attack something, he often evaluates it ... Likewise, the way in which the results of an evaluation are accepted depends on whether they help or hinder the person receiving them. Evaluation is an integral part of the political processes of our society." [1]

This is a key point for researchers to recognise when they are engaged in evaluation research, for it can affect the way they approach the task, the questions they ask, the methodology they employ, and the publication of the results. More importantly, it raises questions as to why the evaluation has been requested in the first place.

Secondly, evaluation always involves multiple perspectives. The researcher, the sponsor, the participants, the recipients, and so on will all be looking for something different from an evaluation. The phrase 'where you stand depends on where you sit' reminds us that the parties involved in a project or a programme to be evaluated will tend to have a different interpretation of the purpose or aims and objectives. This also makes an evaluation problematic, particularly as the research by Scheirer [2] suggests that the participants' perceptions of a programme are nearly always positive, for sound social psychological reasons, regardless of any objective evidence of the success or failure of the project or programme. This leads some writers to argue for or against the use of either a qualitative (i.e. subjective) or quantitative (i.e. objective) approach to evaluation, which again is an ideological debate. Scheirer says that this is a basic dilemma for evaluators, especially when outsiders' quantiative assessments and insiders' intuitive perceptions generate a totally different picture of the same situation. Most evaluators would agree that a combination of more than one approach would be most illuminating (i.e. the use of 'triangulation' of methodologies).

However, some sponsors specify their requirement of statistical or 'hard' data, even if it is at variance with other kinds of data. Orlans [3] has written about some of the ethical problems that may occur between sponsors and researchers, but conflict over the determination of the kind of data that they require to emerge is not discussed, and yet for those engaged in evaluation research this may be a serious problem, i.e. what counts as valid and reliable data.

The very fact that an evaluation is demanded, that someone is called to account, is also political insofar as this is a reflection of power. We have to be aware of the potential of research sponsors to wish to use the findings of evaluation research to legitimate decisions either already made or about to be made. This could lead to interference in the production of 'objective' evaluation research to specify what counts as appropriate and inappropriate indicators of the success or failure of a programme or project. This, of course, is a central concern of those engaged in evaluation research, and it's a question of the validity of the indicators or criteria being used to measure success or failure. Although we do not wish to focus on this specific issue in this paper, it is worth noting the distinction that is made between process and product, as made by Becher [4]. Process evaluation refers to research into what happens on a day-to-day basis, with an emphasis on description, quality, transactions, and negotiations with those involved in the project as it happens. Product evaluation emphasises objective measurement or appraisal of specified outcomes in a prescriptive or judgemental way, often carrying implications of blame or praise, being formal in approach, and tending to emphasise the values of fairness, impartiality and objectivity. The latter may lend itself more readily to discussion of cost-effectiveness, seeing education in terms of inputs and outputs, or what Gray et al refer to as costs [5], or opportunity costs.

And evaluation reflects power of sponsors over others in another way. The disregard of research findings is a common experience in policymaking based on social science research. In most research projects it is possible to challenge the methodology and therefore the findings on grounds of reliability and/or validity. But Hawkins et alia argue that decision-makers have often failed to utilise the results of evaluation studies

> "in all too many instances, even when available, methodologically sound research is not used by decision makers in program or policy planning. Design rigor and valid findings that give clear evidence of differential program impact are necessary but not sufficient to ensure that pertinent consumers of evaluative studies will either familiarise themselves with research findings or use them constructively." [6]

They go on to argue that researchers need to develop a greater understanding of the environmental context in which the evaluation takes place if they wish to understand the under-utilisation of research findings. That is, evaluators need to study the criteria upon which decision makers base their decisions in designing their evaluation. This illustrates how the power of the sponsors leads to this priority rather than any alternative approach to the problem, which is clearly political. This takes us into a growing area of research - meta-evaluation research, or the evaluation of evaluation research. Who evaluates the evaluators? This is an important question because the issue of objectivity does not rest solely with those carrying out evaluation research, but with the audiences or readers of such research, and some of these audiences have more power than others.

It follows from this point that evaluation is closely related to accountability. Nuttall found it 'difficult to make a clear distinction' between evaluation and accountability, and argued that

> "accountability implies evaluation (or the provision of information to allow evaluation), while evaluation usually implies some form of accountability (if only to oneself as being morally responsible for one's action)." [7]

Not all writers on evaluation would agree with this. Becher, for example, suggests that although evaluation and accountability are indeed closely associated, they are not symmetrical, for

> "accountability presupposes evaluation, but evaluation does not necessarily imply accountability." [8]

There is, he says, a difference between being called to give an account, and being called to account:

> "Teachers or lecturers may be pleased to give an account of their work, but only in terms that they find acceptable. They are reluctant, and indeed may refuse, to be called to account for activities or outcomes for which they do not accept responsibility. People do not feel obliged to render or give an account without reason, reward or punishment. Therefore the obligation to give an account implies the existence of incentives and sanctions, which may be normative, legal or coercive." [9]

In short, some have power over others, and this can pose problems for evaluation researchers, who will differentially call people to account in situations where there is either some explicit or implicit standard of competence been laid down as important to attain, or there is some explicit or implicit goal which has to be achieved. Generally, this may not be seen to be a problem, if all parties agree on the standard or goal, where these are explicit (but this is still problematic - the problem of hegemonic control), but where such standards amd goals emerge from being tacit, implicit or hidden, then evaluators may find themselves in a political conflict about whose account counts.

Given that evaluation is political in nature and beset with ideological difficulties, involving multiple perspectives, it is important that the underlying theoretical assumptions are fully understood. One such set of theoretical models has been provided by MacDonald [10], who distinguishes three:

(i) Bureaucratic evaluation. This is when the values of those who sponsor the research, or those in office (especially government) are accepted, and the point of the evaluation is unambiguously to assist the sponsors in their planning or decision-making. Key concepts are 'service', 'utility' and 'efficiency', and the key justificatory concept is 'the reality of power' (i.e. those with power to make the decisions).

(ii) Autocratic evaluation. Here the emphasis is very much on the need for objectivity or impartiality. The research is seen to be carried out independently, appealing to the wider research community and academic freedom.

(iii) Democratic evaluation. This model stresses value-pluralism, in which the evaluator acts as a kind of 'broker' between the multiple perspectives, attempting to represent a range of viewpoints, issues and the process of issue-formation. An underlying assumption is that research findings should be equally accessible to all, and not written for one specific audience. Key concepts within this model are 'confidentiality', 'negotiation' and 'accessibility', and emphasises 'the right to know'.

MacDonald himself has a clear preference for the third of these models. However, it could be argued that this model is both contradictory and based on myth. For example, stressing confidentiality hides a paradox. If some information is withheld on the grounds of confidentiality, in whose interests does this operate? Are the powerful to be as protected or more protected than the powerless? Who decides and on what basis that information should be controlled? There are dangers that such a model is merely a facade for the first or second model. The point, however, is not to assess the validity of these models here, but merely to stress the political nature of evaluation and accountability, and to try and illustrate this theme through an actual example or case study.

2. Case Study: Evaluation of a Local Voluntary Organisation

In November 1983 I was invited by the management committee of Home-Start, a local voluntary organisation providing be-friending support for families with children under the age of five, to carry out an evaluation of their project. At that time, the project in the city was a little over a year old, although nationally such projects had been in existence for ten years or more. I was told that the organisation had some excess money left in their budget at the end of the financial year which needed spending, and thought that an evaluation was the most appropriate way of spending that money, since voluntary organisations were increasingly being called into account, not only to justify how they have spent grants and funds awarded to them, but also to demonstrate their 'success'. The first of these tasks appears on the surface to be relatively unproblematic. Looking at the financial accounts of the organisation it is possible to discern patterns in expenditure, and to demonstrate that the money has not been misappropriated. But this becomes more problematic when those patterns of expenditure have to be justified. For example, it becomes a meta-evaluation problem when trying to justify the spending of nearly ten per cent of its annual income on evaluation, money which could have been spent on training more volunteers, more direct publicity, facilitating activities for the families in the project and so on. Thus, a clear requirement of the evaluation was to establish that the project was 'cost-effective'.

This is a separate issue from evaluating the 'success' or otherwise of a project. Given that the aim of any evaluation is to make judgements on the basis of data which has been systematically collected, often these judgements will be about the social value of a particular scheme, or its 'success' in terms of how far it has achieved its stated goals, or how much change has occurred as a consequence of the intervention of the project. Both these were impossible in this case. The latter was impossible because in a short evaluation project it was not possible to set up the 'experimental' conditions necessary over a long time, to be able to establish that the changes brought about were directly attributable to Home-Start intervention, rather than to any other variable or combination of variables. Such 'proof' could only be inferred, not scientifically or statistically demonstrated. The former was impossible in the sense that any long-term goals could not be evaluated in the short-term, and since many of the stated aims and objectives were long-term, the evaluator was given an impossible task. One of the objectives was to build a 'good and strong foundation from which a respected and independent organisation' could emerge. Whilst judgement could be passed on whether a 'good and strong foundation' had been established, it was difficult to say at that stage whether or not 'a respected and independent organisation' would emerge.

For this reason, the evaluation placed stress on process rather than product, and confessed to being a largely impressionistic inquiry, which would have appeared to have fitted the 'democratic model' in that an effort was made to obtain the views of the families in the project, the volunteers who worked with them, the full-time paid co-ordinator, the members of the management committee and those involved in establishing the organisation, and the referring agencies who put the project into contact with the families. The methodology employed was a combination of documentary analysis (going through minutes of steering committee and management committee meetings, grant applications, volunteers' diaries, etc.), participant observation over a period of six months including visits to families whilst the volunteers were there, attendance at volunteers' training events and group meetings, management committee meetings, and meetings for the families, their children and volunteers, and the use of in-depth interviews with families, volunteers, the co-ordinator, members of the steering and management committees and referral agencies. This generated a wealth of qualitative data, which took another six months to write up. The final report had chapters on the background to the development of the project in the city, the kinds of families included in the project, the background characteristics and motivation of the volunteers, and the role of the organiser, before a concluding chapter which attempted to summarise and evaluate the project. The final draft was about 150 pages long, which I presented to the members of the management committee who had requested the evaluation. They were clearly disturbed by the size of the document, implying that no one would read it, and then said that they were looking for something no more than twenty pages long, which could be read by local councillors and members of local government committees who would be the ones making decisions as to whether their funding would be continued. It then became clear that the emphasis of the evaluation should have been on the 'cost-effectiveness' of the project rather than any attempt to look at its 'success', and that much of the data collected was to be discarded. As a result, a shorter document was produced of about thirteen pages, which was basically the concluding chapter of the original submission with more statistical data included and a case study added in at the researcher's insistence that such stories tell more about the value of the project than any real or hypothetical statistical facts and figures [11].

Even then not every one was satisfied. The co-ordinator was upset because some of the volunteers had passed negative comments about the project, and it was felt important and necessary to report these back, and this was attempted in as sensitive a way as possible, but even so, being only one co-ordinator, it left little doubt where the responsibility lay. Inevitably, some of the comments made relating to the co-ordinator were omitted after due consideration, especially if they were felt to be the views of one or two individuals, rather than a majority view (in line with the democratic model). The researcher had to stress that it was the project which was being evaluated, not the people within it. But more importantly, perhaps, was the fact that the management committee were still not happy with the final report. Their concern was that in attempting to be objective in examining the 'cost-effectiveness' of the organisation, I had described the organisation as 'relatively expensive' and had explained why - because first year organiser, and because it trained its volunteers (i.e. it was a 'professional' voluntary organisation). I was asked to change the phrase to 'relatively cheap'. This led to a protracted discussion in which the researcher came to accept that however objectively the research was carried out and the report written, that the audience to whom it was addressed may not be as objective in their reading of it, and would selectively perceive phrases in the report in order to legitimate their decision not to renew their funding. It was only then that the political nature of evaluation research became clear to me.

3. Emergent Issues

From this case study, there are clearly a number of issues which need discussion and relating back to the assumptions in the first part of the paper. The first of these is to do with sponsorship and power. It should be obvious from the case study that there was a certain amount of ambiguity in the perceived reasons for the evaluation by the sponsors, and the purposes to which they wished to put the research. Retrospectively, this can be understood as them seeing the researcher as an autocratic evaluator, brought in from a university environment, characterised by objectivity and academic freedom, but yet able to meet the demands of a bureaucratic evaluation. Yet, in the end they were subject to the power of other decision makers upon whom their existence would seem to depend, and this contradicted their views on the need for impartiality and objectivity. This led them to challenge the methodology of the research, particularly its emphasis on qualititative rather than quantitative data, but also on the writing of the report, and for whom it was written. It was not to assist the co-ordinator in her task, nor to feedback to families, volunteers or referral agencies that they were doing a good job, nor even to the management committee to confirm that their project was worthwhile. All that, it would appear, had been taken for granted. The people who needed persuading were the funding agencies whose sole concern was for 'cost-effectiveness' (it did not seem to matter as to what it was 'effective'). This had consequences for the final report. Firstly, as I have said, it was shorter than it was intended by the researcher. Secondly, it included much more statistical data, some of which was based on hypothetical scenarios because it was impossible to provide the kind of data they would require. And thirdly, the language used in the drafting of the report was refined and altered so that it made sense more to those funding the project than to the people involved in it.

How objective then was the final report? Objectivity in social research has always been based on myth. Ever since the challenge thrown down by Gouldner [12] in the 1960s, the problematic nature of seeking to be objective has been well discussed. In this case, the report was written for a particular audience, with a view to defending something, knowing that unless it was done in this way the results of the evaluation would be ignored in any case. House's view of evaluation as part of political ideology cannot but be taken seriously. Yet, what was interesting in this case was that the data was collected with a different set of expectations and audience in mind, and this suggests that the issue of objectivity is much more complex than often discussed. Objectivity is a problem in how the data is collected, how it is interpreted and re-interpreted, how it is reported, and how it is read or received.

This relates to the problem of multiple perspectives. In attempting to use the democratic model a number of difficulties emerge. The saying suggests that 'you can't please all the people all of the time'. This is certainly true in evaluation research. But the real problem is who is to be pleased? It would appear that those with power become the significant audience. In the case study, it did not seem to matter in the end what the research had to say about the families or the volunteers, without whom there would be no such schemes in the first place. One of the dominant themes to emerge from the evaluation was that the aims and objectives of the project failed to recognise the dialectical nature of voluntary work, in that it is not only the families or statutory services who benefit from the volunteers' intervention, but the volunteers themselves. Those who have written about the role of the volunteer have recognised that volunteers get as much from their work as they put into it, and that altruism is also mythical [13]. Sponsors of voluntary projects, interested in 'cost-effectiveness' do not seem to take this aspect of the projects into account.

Hence, only the explicit aims and objectives, written down in grant applications and the constitution, seem to be valid indicators of the measurement of either the cost-effctiveness or 'success' of such projects. Yet, as the evaluation proceeds from these, it discovers along the route that alternative, often covert aims and objectives exist. Scheirer talks about the 'unacknowledged, often political' goals which may provide important motivation for those who support a programme or project, but which are not generally included in the project evaluation. Thus, evaluation is not merely about measurement of pre-existing criteria, but the discovery of alternative indicators. Quantitative research procedures often focus on the testing out of preconceived hypotheses, whereas qualitative research is more exploratory, and since both methodological strategies are available to evaluation researchers, then a combination of hypothesis testing and hypothesis generating must be permissible outcomes of evaluation research.

But in the end much of this depends on whom the final report is written for. Whilst it is possible that in theory a researcher seeks to subscribe to a democratic evaluation model, in practice she or he may be forced into an bureaucratic model, because of the power of one audience over another. Evaluation needs to feed back to all parties concerned, not only those controlling the purse strings. One common criticism aimed at contemporary social science research is that it is parasitic. The sponsors of the research can use the findings to legitimate their decisions, the researchers can benefit financially or in terms of career or professional status, but what do those people who supply the data, often called 'subjects', get in return? This criticism has particularly been made by feminist researchers who have recognised the reproduction of patriarchal oppression through research procedures [14], and such radical re-thinking of research will inevitably have implications for evaluation research, which will perhaps bring it back more closely to the so-called democratic evaluation model, with its emphasis on negotiation and accessibility. If nothing else this will serve to highlight the political nature of all research, not just evaluation research, and in particular the procedures through which those with hegemonic power and control are able to maintain their interests through persuasion by appeal to 'autocratic' research with which to legitimate their decisions, which whether based on the acceptance or rejection of social science research, remain political decisions.

4. Lessons for Adult Education Evaluation Research

This paper has focussed on an evaluation of a voluntary organisation in order to illustrate the political nature of evaluation research, and in particular the myth of objectivity and the issue of accountability. What has this to do with adult education research? I would contend, as someone who teaches and researches in adult education that the issues are basically similar. As with the statutory and voluntary sector in the social services, the statutory and voluntary provision of education is increasingly being called into account. The present government is most concerned to draw up criteria for the evaluation of teaching performance, and will be employing quasi-research bodies sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission or the Further Education Unit in order to validate both the concern and the procedure. Adult education providers will not be exempt from such a demand. Already through the revision of DES funding arrangements and the UGC judgemental factors on what counts as worthwhile research, the university adult education departments are having to begin to evaluate their work. Given that a good deal of non-university adult education is provided by the statutory sector or by voluntary agencies, then it will not be long before all adult education provision will be subject to more formal evaluation procedures (given that most of us involved in course provision inevitably employ informal evaluation procedures of our courses or programmes each year before we plan for the following year).

It is also a possibility that when such research is required, those engaged in research in university departments will be called on to carry out that research. Given these possibilities, it is perhaps important that the lessons relating to the political nature of evaluation research are taken seriously, even if they have to be borrowed from outside adult education research.

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EDUCATION AND OLDER ADULTS - A 'MAPPING EXERCISE'

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Origins

UDACE (the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education in England and Wales) examines areas of possible development in education for adults, recommends strategies for development and sponsors projects which will encourage such development. The overall pattern of the Unit's work is decided by a Steering Committee which sets up small Development Groups of experienced practitioners to examine particular topics. Priority is given to topics where development will improve access to educational opportunities, contribute to the creation of a more coherent service and is likely to improve the quality of education available to adults.

In 1985, an Older Adults Development Group was set up by UDACE. Phase I of the Group's work was a six month national enquiry into the involvement of people over state retirement age in learning,both as recipients and contributors. It was acknowledged that a growing proportion of the population is within this age group and that their learning needs have not been the subject of systematic investigation, nor have most education providing agencies seriously considered their policy in this field. Thus the enquiry was seen as a 'mapping exercise' which would hopefully reflect the broad range of involvement of older adults in activities where there is a deliberate intention to learn and provide a basis on which the Development Group could make recommendations to the UDACE Steering Committee for further action.

Methodology

As the researcher undertaking the exercise, I worked with the Development Group in identifying the aims of the project:

- to describe the nature and extent of involvement by people over the age of 60 in learning - formal, non-formal and informal - including their role as contributors to the learning of other people
- to identify physical, social, psychological and cultural barriers which restrict the access of older people to learning
- to identify areas in need of further research in the education of older adults

The methodology utilised

i) secondary data
- relevant published literature and research including available statistics
- unpublished reports
- course descriptions and publicity material
- written evidence supplied by individuals in response to personal contact or press publicity

ii) request statistics
- information about the participation of older adults in educational activities was sought from a sample of twenty LEAs in England and Wales, of which sixteen responded; other LEAs and organisations/institutions submitted evidence as a result of personal contact or press publicity.

iii) key informants
- an overview of the perceptions and attitudes of a cross-section of those involved in the provision of educational opportunities for older people in three different areas of the country was obtained. Because of time constraints, contact had to be made quickly and thus informants were located via Community Education Officers in areas where some of the members of the Development Group operated. All the informants volunteered to discuss their work and ideas about learning and older adults.

Process

The informants who agreed to talk about their work were sent an 'interview schedule' in advance so that they had some idea of the type of information being sought. Some informants chose to stick closely to this in the interview situation and had written down 'answers' in advance; others preferred to talk at length using the schedule as a guide; others again did not use the schedule at all but were anxious to discuss what they were doing with an 'outsider'. The latter group saw the interview as an opportunity to exchange information with someone who had knowledge of what was happening in other parts of the country. Many of the informants were also anxious to find out what other organisations in their locality were doing and in this case, the exercise also developed a networking function and served to highlight some of the deficiencies which exist in communication between educational providers. It should be added that some of the LEAs who responded to the request for statistical information about the involvement of over-60s in learning activities had decided to keep such statistics in 'the future' although they had not thought to do so before.

Outcomes

The findings from the secondary data and the statistical enquiry together with the main points made by the informants were written up into a report for the Development Group. Obviously, the information generated by the interviews was considerable and thus the final report represented a subjective selection of comments and a subjective classification of informants' perceptions and attitudes. However, during the writing-up, I met frequently with the Development Group and incorporated their suggestions into the final draft where possible. Although I had considerable freedom in deciding the final shape of the report, it was helpful to be able to call upon the individual knowledge and expertise of Group members.

I did not consider it was part of my remit to make recommendations; areas requiring priority action by UDACE were subsequently identified by members of the Development Group, but I did sit in on their initial deliberations when the report was complete.

Comments

At a time when we are faced with the problems of rapidly expanding educational needs and demands, of costs, efficiency and the availablity of resources, with educational inequalities and with educational quality and relevance, it is increasingly likely that evaluation research will take the form of short-term developmental investigations to enable policy makers and practitioners make decisions about goals, Priorities and strategies. Such investigations must inevitably raise further questions about the control, methodology and process of such exercises.

THE USE OF COMPUTERS IN COURSE PROGRAMME EVALUATION: A DISCUSSION PAPER

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The application of computers to assist in the evaluation of course programmes should be of value to directors of extra-mural - I use this phrase to include continuing education - departments and those members of the departments who are responsible for large course programmes. Computers do not necessarily offer an advantage to all staff tutors in their programme management roles since, if they are running a programme of, say, 30 or 40 courses, a computer is hardly necessary. If they are responsible for 70 or 80 courses however, (as, for example, a few extra-mural tutors are) or if they are responsible for 200 courses, as I understand programmers in the United States often are, then paper systems for recording information become overwhelmed. This is the time to turn to a computer.

We do not need to consider computer hardware in any detail here since, as far as continuing educators need be concerned, computers are very straightforward machines: they simply take in information, store information, and give out information. It is this ability to give out information easily, quickly and accurately that provides the benefit from the computer from our point of view. If I asked a reasonably simple question of our Departmental Records office two years ago (say, can I have a list of the astronomy courses the Department is running this year, grouped by county, with the number of students and the net income for each) the clerk's face would fall and she would have to spend her lunchtime gathering the information from the punched card system that was used to record the course data at that time. Now, with a computer, to get this information is the work of a few minutes. Computers can give us the information needed to evaluate programmes easily and quickly.

To put the content of this paper into context, it might be useful to mention that we are using a computer in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies in the University of Bristol for more than just course programme evaluation. Since 1 August, 1985, all the Department's course information, tutor information, student information and financial information has been recorded on a Hewlett Packard 3000 minicomputer which is also used for administrative computing throughout the University. This has then been used to give outputs to reduce our clerical load (producing course documents, receipts and so on that do not concern us here), producing administrative information (financial records to accompany cheques and cash received from student fees when they are sent on to the University Finance Office, for example - which also do not concern us here) and evaluative information.

The choice of hardware has been for us the straightforward part of the development. The more difficult questions to answer relate to how the computer can best be used to evaluate the course programme. What questions should we ask? How do we get a measure of the quantity and the quality of the programme? The information required on quantity is relatively easy to define and, once it has been decided what is wanted, particularly easy for the computer to provide. I should value readers' comments on what are the most valuable data to describe the size of a programme. Simply as a start to this discussion, I describe the Bristol system's evaluation output. At the beginning of each month, the Head of the Department gets a breakdown, both by county and by tutor, of the following information:

Number of Courses in the Group	Number Started	Attendances		Number of Courses still running with attendances of				Average Attendance	
		Week 1	Week 4	< 10	10-14	15-19	>24	Week 1	Week 4

Much more information is potentially available but it will take us some time to decide what is most useful for our purposes or, perhaps, what precisely our purposes are.

By itself, a line of numbers means relatively little, but by comparing it with others, comparing counties or tutors, or comparing it with the same line from the previous year, it becomes much more meaningful. One should not expect all the lines (that is, all the county performances or all the tutor performances) to be the same; the situation is likely to be different for different counties and different subjects. That goes without saying. One other equally obvious point to make - although it may be more difficult to rectify - is that the computer will only print out what has been put in to it: if a number has been entered wrongly, the numbers coming out that are based on it will come out wrongly; if the number has not been keyed in at all, then nothing at all will come out. All this is obvious but the organisation of the department to ensure that the information is entered accurately, and as soon as it is available, is by no means a trivial matter.

At the end of the year, in the Bristol system, the Head of Department gets another breakdown of quantitative measurements, listed just by organising tutor. In this case the information output is:

income				expenditure				total income	total expenditure	net income	number of courses				total number of students
GANR	GAR	NGAR	NGANR	GANR	GAR	NGAR	NGANR				GANR	GAR	NGAR	NGANR	

The Department runs some courses that are aided by a grant from the

Department of Education & Science and some that are not. It also runs some courses that are residential and some that are not. It is useful to distinguish between the four categories that therefore arise in the data: grant aided non-residential (GANR); grant aided residential (GAR); non-grant aided residential (NGAR); and non-grant aided non-residential (NGANR).

This is simple summative quantitative data.

What about quality? Here the going gets harder. We should bear in mind that we are concerned with the quality of a programme, not just individual courses. Can we define course quality just in terms of student attendance and course finance data? Furthermore, is the quality of the programme simply the sum of some measure of the quality of the individual courses? The answer to the latter question depends on the criteria for quality that are adopted but I would suggest not. Of course the quality of the individual courses contributes to the quality of the programme as a whole. But, if the programme objectives are that it should contain a wide range of academic subjects, or a wide range of academic levels, or that the courses should take place in a wide range of geographical locations, all of which could be perfectly reasonable objectives, then these must be capable of evaluation too. We are not in a position to say what objectives someone else's programme should have - although it would be interesting to have readers' suggestions. As two useful measures - I would not go so far as to call them measures of quality - the Bristol system produces

Average Number of Students per Course	Net Income per Student

for each tutor at the end of the year. To compare these figures from one tutor to another has relatively little meaning. But to compare the figures from one year to the next for a particular tutor can often mean a great deal.

What does one do with the data when one has them? One answer is to give them to the tutors in order that they can get some idea of their success in achieving whatever they set out to do at the beginning of the year.

Does programme evaluation, even in the extremely simple form in which it is described here, help? I think it does. It tells us, if only crudely, what is being provided and certainly it indicates areas where further questions should be asked: why do your courses have 23 students/courses when last year they only had 21? Is this good or bad? Can we learn from this to help other members of the academic staff? If we can, it is no bad thing for the Head of Department, and for the rest of the academic staff, to know. From this consideration, from this questioning, one should get better programmes - however we define 'better'.

This brief paper has posed a number of questions:

what criteria should we use to evaluate a programme?;

what questions should we ask to carry this evaluation out?;

what should we do with the evaluation when we have it?;

how does this help?

The paper has also offered some very tentative and simple answers. I should be interested to know the answers that the reader has to these and related questions.

EVALUATION OF LEARNING ACTIVITY IN VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Brian Barnes
University of Lancaster

INTRODUCTION

In 1983 a report of a survey of provision of Post Initial Education in the North West of England undertaken by Percy *et al* was published by the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education (A.C.A.C.E.). Amongst its findings the survey clearly showed that "learning activity" occurred in voluntary organisations.

In May 1986, the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (U.D.A.C.E.) funded the further development of this work at the University of Lancaster specifying the following aims:

(i) To identify the extent of formal and informal learning activity in voluntary organisations;

(ii) To examine and classify the kinds of learning opportunities developed by voluntary organisations;

(iii) Submit a report to the U.D.A.C.E. Development Group on voluntary/statutory relationships.

A "map" of voluntary organisations (and the defining characteristics of their educational activities) was also to be drawn for three areas - rural, urban and inner city.

The brief then was, in one sense, that of carrying out a large-scale evaluation of activity in the voluntary sector. It was to be a question of describing and classifying that activity and giving some of it an educational "value". The value-laden difficulties of defining activity as "educational" while those who are actually participating in it apply to it no "educational" constructs at all, are considerable. There are also dangers in subjecting what might be a completely informal and spontaneous activity to the rigours of external scrutiny. In a real sense, the U.D.A.C.E. enquiry was not evaluating voluntary organisations in the usually accepted sense of the word; nevertheless, participants in such organisations could easily see it as such.

This paper is based on early stages of research by the author (Barnes, 1986) which constituted part of the U.D.A.C.E. project based at Lancaster.

CONSTRAINTS

The scope of the work was limited by various constraints including:

(i) Time

Only three months were available for field work and a further month for report writing;

(ii) Size

Of the three areas designated, the urban one alone (Preston) had 435 listed voluntary organisations;

(c) Variety

The variety of voluntary organisations was found to be great both in the extent to which they had clearly formulated educational aims (if at all) and their pattern of organisational characteristics - significant to any sampling procedures;

(iv) Membership Sensitivity

As members of these societies often do not see themselves as being involved in an educational activity (rather do they see their society as a social organisation within which they can pursue their particular interest in company with those of like mind), previous 'bad' educational experiences may cause them to feel threatened by anything other than an indirect approach in any attempt to evaluate the educational aspects of their activity.

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

In the early stages of the work, the urban area was selected in order to pilot the research.

The selection of the individual societies/clubs was carried out by taking a stratified sample in which two constraints were applied; firstly, that the clubs selected should reflect the range of categories noted in Percy *et al* (1983) and later subsumed into four 'orientations' noted in Percy (1986); and, secondly, that they should meet weekly so as to allow a sufficient number of visits to take place to complete the intended investigations in the time available.

Beyond this, the clubs were selected by enumerating the 435 societies selecting the first six to fulfil the above criteria using a table of random numbers (Kendall and Babington-Smith (1969)).

The clubs selected were as follows:

ORIENTATION	SOCIETY
Special Interest	Preston Jazz Club Preston District Model Rail Sub-Aqua New Longton Artists

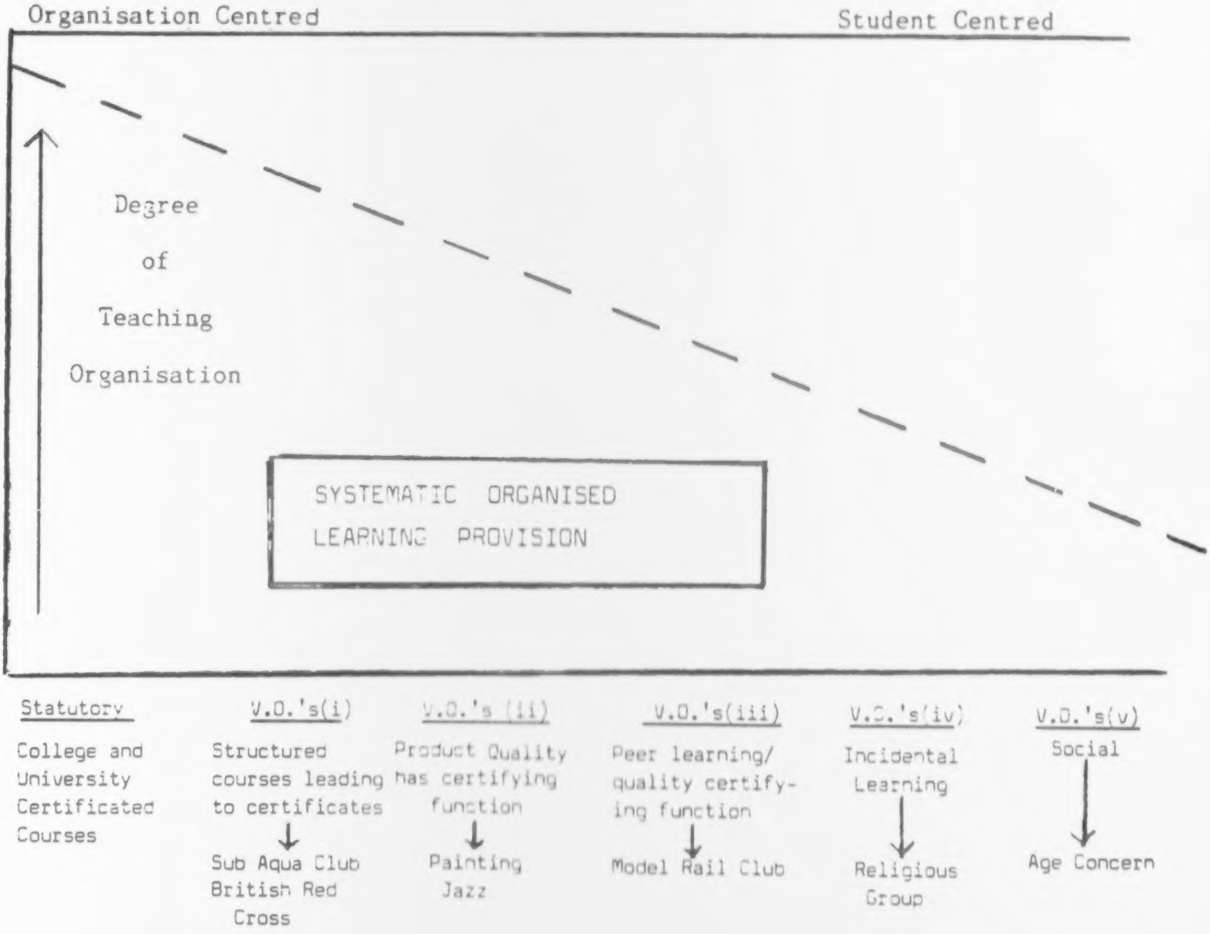
ORIENTATION	SOCIETY
Service	British Red Cross
Social	Age Concern
Advocacy	Co-operative Development Agency Consumer Group

The 'Advocacy' societies were later rejected as they were shown later not to conform to the original remit.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STATUTORY EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Elsey (1972) suggested that in terms of their learning provision voluntary organisations occupy a position midway between mass entertainment and formal educational activity. However, at a preliminary stage of the investigation the heterogeneity of the voluntary organisations in terms of their entry requirements, certification definition/acquisition and pattern of club activity in relation to this was perceived as a continuum with that of the statutory provision. The model noted below is provided as an illustration of this:

GRADATIONS IN ORGANISATION OF LEARNING SITUATIONS IN STATUTORY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS


Organisation Centred
Student Centred
Degree of Teaching Organisation
SYSTEMATIC ORGANISED LEARNING PROVISION
Statutory
College and University Certificated Courses
V.O.'s(i)
Structured courses leading to certificates
Sub Aqua Club British Red Cross
V.O.'s (ii)
Product Quality has certifying function
Painting Jazz
V.O.'s(iii)
Peer learning/ quality certifying function
Model Rail Club
V.O.'s(iv)
Incidental Learning
Religious Group
V.O.'s(v)
Social
Age Concern

It can thus be seen that at least some of these organisations have much in common with the statutory formal adult agencies and these (at least) may offer potential for statutory agency/voluntary organisation collaboration on educational matters.

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION

What measures then can we use to evaluate the educational activities of voluntary organisations and how can we determine numerical expressions as an index of this? Clearly, it is in this way that this research may be considered evaluative.

Four techniques are to be employed:

(i) A general postal-enquiry addressed to all the societies in the area (i.e. 435);

(ii) Interviewing the secretaries of the societies selected;

(iii) Holding personal interviews with between 70-100 (approximately 25%) of the members of the above societies;

(iv) Observing the behavioural activities of around six (15%) of the members of each society investigated according to a predetermined schedule.

As in any research of this sort, the data suffers from being subjective. However, it is hoped to counter this at least when observing the behaviour of members, by having two observers operating on the same subject concurrently. Also one must guard against other factors such as the 'Hawthorne' effect.

HOW WILL THE DATA BE USED?

McGivney (1985) has already provided data on voluntary/statutory relationships and it is expected that the outcomes of this work will contribute to the development of this U.D.A.C.E. theme.

It might also be seen as helping to develop criteria/mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating educational activity in voluntary organisations.

However, it is paramount in such considerations that the management autonomy and the social and democratic nature of these organisations should be left intact, otherwise bureaucratic intervention will sound the death knell of a valuable educational resource which appears to extend into parts of our society not always reached by the formal educational agencies.

NOTE:

The U.D.A.C.E. research team at Lancaster University, directed by Keith Percy, was to submit its report in December 1986.

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EVALUATION RESEARCH IN ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION: A POSTSCRIPT

Keith Percy
University of Lancaster

Sixteen researchers and academics participated in the three sessions on evaluation research at the Hull conference. Eight of them were involved in the presentation of papers and these succeeded in generating discussion which had an internal logic and which made progress as one paper succeeded another. Towards the end of the third session Arthur Stock (NIACE) presented a masterly overview of the papers and discussion and provided a framework and a source of future directive for what had been said.

Stock made the point that during the sessions there had been some fudging of the distinctions between analytic/descriptive research and evaluation research. On the other hand, it was possible to argue that much analytic/descriptive research which attempted to delineate a field or to categorise good practice was *de facto* evaluative. In choosing to give certain factors centrality, the researcher was, in fact, assigning to them a value.

Much of the discussion dealt with actual examples of the generally agreed view that evaluation research was fraught with political hazards and was increasingly occupying an important place in the politics of adult and continuing education. Evaluation was much in demand by policymakers, administrators, politicians and purse-holders. The inherent hazards related to the ways in which the sponsors of evaluation research might know the answers which they hoped the researchers would find; in which evaluation might be called upon to play a role in policy justification or policy defence.

A significant part of the discussion dealt also with the limitations of time, resources and access to data which the sponsors of evaluation research often imposed upon researchers. Sponsors wanted to know too much, in too short a time with unrealistically low expenditure of resource. Sponsors were often ignorant of the nature of evaluation research, of what could be done, of what was knowable and what findings meant.

These considerations all added up to a large responsiblity for evaluation researchers. They were the gatekeepers of the political uses of their work. Sometimes contracts might have to be refused; there were instances in which it was necessary to refuse to change conclusions and to insist on the right to publish. It was agreed that there could also be a responsiblity for a body such as SCUTREA, which might seek for ways in which it could educate its masters, i.e. devise procedures through which sponsors of evaluation research in government, local government and other circles should be shown the nature and proper scope of evaluation research.

WORKSHOP ON ACTION/PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Nod Miller
University of Manchester

The aim of the workshop

When I was asked to organise some sessions on action/participatory research at this year's SCUTREA Conference, it seemed to me most appropriate to set up a workshop with the aim of exploring the interrelationship of politics, research and adult education, by involving participants in a piece of action research to be conducted during the Conference itself. I asked Jim Brown, a freelance consultant and trainer with whom I have been collaborating in research and training projects for the last four years, to help in the planning and organisation of the workshop. (Jim offers some personal observations on the SCUTREA Conference below.)

In the course of designing the workshop, we discussed our own ideas about action research at some length, and agreed that two important assumptions underlying our model of action research were **the intention to promote change through the research**, and **the involvement of participants as both subjects and objects of the research**. These assumptions were central to our thinking about the SCUTREA workshop.

Activities during the Conference

It seemed to us that it might be helpful to have some information about the political orientation and research styles of Conference participants, in order to inform our discussion of the politics of adult education research, and to facilitate the promotion of political change within the Conference membership by workshop participants. On the first day of the Conference, we used a questionnaire to collect data from Conference members on their voting behaviour, involvement in political organisations and research activities; we also asked them about the occupational groups with which they came into contact in the course of their work, in order to assess something of the potential for influence possessed by adult educators, and about the policy changes they would most wish to bring about in the field of adult education. We questioned about half of those present at the Conference, and while we would not want to make grand claims about the significance of the data collected, we were struck by the fact that none of those we talked to were supporters of the Conservative Party, and by the fact that those present at the Conference possessed a potential constituency of influence ranging from Members of Parliament to unemployed people. It also seemed that Conference members had relatively easy access to channels for the dissemination of information and ideas, judging from the impressive publication records reported by many of those present.

Twenty people attended the workshop on the second day of the Conference. We introduced the opening session of the workshop with a statement about the purpose of the workshop, and reported on the findings from our survey. We also outlined the programme for the rest of the day. Most of the morning session was spent in exercises which were designed to facilitate the formation of sub-groups whose task was to plan and carry out action research. The exercises involved workshop members in arranging themselves in hierarchical lines ('line-ups') according to features such as age, income and occupational status, and dividing into groups ('splits') according to orientation to research and politics (there were splits between, for example, 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' researchers, and between 'subjective' and 'objective' researchers). During the day there were two process review meetings attended by all workshop members, and we made audio-recordings of our discussions during these sessions. An additional meeting, attended by about one-third of workshop participants, took place at 11 p.m., the purpose of which was to decide how our activities should be reported upon in the plenary session on the third day of the Conference.

It seems fair to say that our deliberations and actions during the workshop were characterised by a high degree of diversity and disagreement. Some participants were critical of the exercises which had led to the generation of the sub-groups, while others felt that the names which the sub-groups gave to themselves ('Unfreezers', 'Refreezers', 'Facilitators' and 'Michaels'[-or, perhaps, 'Reflectors']) gave an accurate indication of political divisions and disagreements within the Conference as a whole. One participant commented:

> 'One big division here is whether you're confronting power or serving power...another is [between] people who enjoy conflict and people who try to ameliorate conflict'.

We reflected a good deal on our professional experience as adult educators, both at the Conference and in our back-home work environments. Several people commented on the 'artificiality' of much Conference activity, and drew attention to what they saw as ritual aspects of our collective behaviour during plenary sessions on the first day of the Conference. One person expressed frustration at what he saw as an attempt to deny hierarchy amongst Conference participants:

> 'We can all be mates in the bar, but at the end of the day I have to deal with professional adult educators who have more power than I have...some of us have power here and we know it, some of us have not got power...The politics of our profession begin at home...We can't tackle issues of hierarchy and oppression in the world outside unless we deal with these things amongst ourselves...'

Another participant expressed unease about what a workman who was going about his business just outside the window of the Conference Hall might think about our abstract and introspective deliberations, and provoked a heated debate about the 'relevance' of the activities of SCUTREA members to the outside world, and some discussion about whether the politics of adult education was about window-dressing - or perhaps about getting better curtains.

Post-Conference activities

Jim and I were anxious to continue the discussion about issues which seemed to us to be central to the politics of research beyond the end of the Conference; we also wished to reflect the views of as many participants as possible in what we reported about the workshop. To this end, we compiled some extracts from the transcripts of review discussions and circulated these to all workshop participants shortly after the end of the Conference, and invited comments; about half of the participants responded. The comments we received again reflected a lack of consensus about the experience of the workshop (and, perhaps, about the politics of adult education research). Some people felt that the workshop had been stimulating and useful, while others expressed disappointment and criticism about certain aspects of the design of the workshop ; we certainly intend to take account of their criticisms in planning future work of this kind. There were several comments relating to the difficulty involved in extracting a representative picture of what happened in the workshop on the basis of 'edited highlights' of transcripts; as one participant remarked, 'One does extract what one finds significant oneself'. Several people drew attention to the high levels of frustration expressed during the workshop; one person saw this frustration as being directed 'at the academic way of approaching problems, particularly political problems, with a good deal of talk and very little action'.

For myself, I was gratified by the interest generated in the workshop, both at the Conference and afterwards, and feel that the dialogue which I have begun with a number of those who attended the workshop is likely to continue for a long time to come.

Some personal reflections on the workshop

During one of the review sessions, one of those present made a statement about how he disliked having his personal experience categorised by others. This remark is one I have reflected on a good deal , and of which I have been very conscious in attempting to report on the workshop in the plenary session at the Conference, and in writing this account. I am also struck by the fact that conventional (non-participatory) research methodologies generally involve the categorisation of others' experience, and that researchers often fail to draw attention to the problems inherent in this process.

Since the Conference, I have found myself reflecting at length on a number of issues raised in the workshop, concerning, for example, the extent to which action research can be, or indeed should be, 'scientific', and the distinction (or lack of it) between action research and action learning. As usual, I find myself generating more questions than answers or conclusions. However, I retain a conviction that it is important that the SCUTREA Conference provides us with opportunities to compare and reflect upon our professional and personal experience as adult educators; I recognise, and am grateful for, the amount which I have learned about, and learned from, colleagues within SCUTREA over the last few years. I find that my own learning is facilitated more effectively in participatory workshop sessions than is the case in more formal Conference settings, where papers are read or we are addressed by 'experts'. I am pleased to have been offered the opportunity to organise a workshop at this year's Conference, and hope that sessions of an experiential - and experimental- nature will feature in future SCUTREA events.

WORKSHOP REPORT

Jim Brown
Leeds

Nod Miller has made the point that there was little consensus about the outcome of the workshop we ran at this year's conference. After some discussion we felt it might be helpful if I was to write an adjoiner to her report, providing an 'outsider's' view of the experience. I count myself as an outsider on the basis that I neither work in a University nor am I concerned with teaching and research into adult education practice.

The workshop set out to explore the politics of action research using a modelling device of researching the political views of the workshop participants. It became very clear to me on the first day of the conference that there was a predominant political culture attached to SCUTREA, as expressed by Professor Nisbet in his keynote address. Furthermore, I was very aware that my own political beliefs were in opposition to these views. I have tried to summarise this contrast in Table One.

Table One: Contrasting Political Cultures at Conference

Predominant SCUTREA culture	vs.	Oppositional culture
Belief in academic liberalism and a tolerance for differences between academics	vs.	Belief in competing academic models where consensus is neither achievable nor desirable
Autonomy of the researcher from subject paramount importance	vs.	Researchers aligned to particular sets of values and interest groups
Research should be free from political influencing	vs.	Research is a political influencing tool
Research is objective, scientific and rational	vs.	Research is subjective, critical and biased

Given this contrast, I think that the workshop we ran can be better understood by testing the following hypothesis. The hypothesis is that the workshop elicited behaviour expressing how an established institutional culture, in this case SCUTREA, protects itself from attack by an oppositional culture. To this end I would like to suggest seven defensive strategies that I feel were observable during the workshop. Table Two lists these strategies, the first column providing an abstract description of the strategy and the second column pointing to supporting evidence that this strategy was being used during the workshop. I believe it would also be possible to analyse the behaviour of the workshop organisers (ourselves) based on the same set of strategies, but used in an offensive as well as defensive manner.

One issue must stand out from this analysis. Is it valid for a workshop to be used as a setting to influence political views, values and beliefs of its participants? This question might point to a major and significant difference between ourselves and the workshop participants. It is my contention that all education involves aspects of influencing the values and beliefs of those being educated. Making this process overt and confrontational allows participants greater opportunity to challenge the orthodoxy which they are being presented, leading towards a more genuine opportunity for learning. The alternative, to deny that any influencing is taking place, merely suggests in my view that covert processes of influencing are taking place.

Table Two: Defensive Strategies adopted in the workshop

STRATEGY DESCRIPTION	OBSERVABLE EVIDENCE
MENSURATION	
The institution develops its own measures of excellence which are biased in favour of its own practices and critical of counter cultural practices.	A number of participants were severely critical of the opening exercises in the workshop where participants were asked to make an either/or choice based on a series of statements about research Criticism focussed on the ambiguous nature of these statements which made either/or choices impossible. This was seen as poor quality work by some participants. However from our point of view these questions were high quality, generating as they did a high degree of uncertainty and controversy in the minds of participants. Measured on this different scale they were a success.
AGENDA MANAGEMENT	
Protectors of the institution attempt to place issues critical of the institution outside the agenda of discussion.	Throughout the workshop there was a continuous struggle to focus the discussion on issues 'within SCUTREA'. This was regularly blocked by some participants who kept shifting the focus onto the 'outside world'. Consequently much of the debate shifted from issues that were critical of SCUTREA onto safer issues of politics in the wider world.
SUBJECTIFICATION	
The institution maintains the loyalty of its members by generating a 'false consciousness' of subjective interests, obscuring the objective interests of these usually weaker members.	A view was expressed during the workshop that SCUTREA relied on recreating the atmosphere of a gentleman's club, a gathering of peers, who could swop drinks in the bar and stories over dinner. Such behaviour tended to obscure some of the real differences in status between participants concerning pay, security of tenure and access to decision making.

continued ...

Table Two continued

STRATEGY DESCRIPTION	OBSERVABLE EVIDENCE
INCORPORATION	
The institution incorporates oppositional views by giving them a platform, without any real access to decision making, influence or power.	Throughout the workshop support was expressed for oppositional views, but attempts to operationalise these views were met with doubts about how this could be achieved. Consequently whilst it was felt possible to express criticism of SCUTREA it was felt impossible to take action on these criticisms.
BACKGROUNDING	
The institution places any internal contradictions in the background, especially if the contradictions are functional to the maintenance of the institution.	Many participants seemed to accept the inevitable contradictions between their own personal beliefs and the institutional behaviour of SCUTREA. Thus whilst many participants were able to identify and support the significance of some of the political issues raised by the workshop, there was also a feeling that these issues were not relevant within the setting of SCUTREA.
DILUTION	
The institution 'dilutes' any opposition it faces by raising other issues of concern which it can then go on to solve, or attaching larger issues to it making action impossible.	When the issue of racialism and sexism within SCUTREA was raised, the issue was diluted by also raising concerns about the situation in South Africa where clearly there was little that SCUTREA could do as an institution.
MYSTIFICATION	
The institution mystifies certain of its cultural processes to protect them from analysis and scrutiny.	During the workshop attempts to define what was meant by action research were clouded by participants importing private definitions which were then validated by referring to an external source or theorist. Such coded definitions and reliance on status allowed institutional behaviour to go unexamined.

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CONCEPTUALIZING INTERNATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY AND PRACTICE

Marcie Boucouvalas
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

The term International adult education is employed and witnessed with increasing frequency of usage among colleagues around the world. Insufficient attention, however, seems to have been given to a discussion of the meaning or many meanings of this term, the scope of the territory, and even less to addressing a conceptualization of international adult education, as a field of both study and practice.

Adult education itself hosts a variety of conceptualizations and to some it may seem inappropriate to complicate matters by adding an "international" qualifier. Albeit fraught with difficulties and caveats it appears time-appropriate to at least begin dialogue toward this end. The purpose of this discussion, therefore, is to offer some preliminary starter-thoughts in that direction.

I shall begin with my own evolving thoughts as to how I might respond to a query as to the scope and territory of international adult education as a field of both study and practice. I invite you to join me in enlarging and deepening this inquiry in an eventual attempt to determine where we might find some consensus, if any, and where our thoughts converge and diverge.

I first became actively engaged in putting pen to paper in an attempt to conceptualize international adult education several years ago when designing a graduate course entitled International Adult Education. A review of the literature revealed a void in this area. Many fine books and articles had been written but different implicit concepts of international adult education were apparent. Since then I have made several attempts to articulate what appeared as the emerging scope and territory of international adult education (Boucouvalas, 1985b, 1985c). This international forum, however, in which we are participating today at the University of Hull seems to represent a first collective activity designed and developed exclusively to help us move closer toward conceptualizing international adult education.

From an International Dimension to a Field of Study and Practice.

The international perspective and dimension to the field of adult education dates back at least as far as the 1929 meeting of the then-World Association of Adult Education held in Cambridge, England. The World Association, based in London, existed from 1919 to the beginning of World War II. Later, UNESCO's input resulted in four international adult education conferences: 1949 in Elsinore, Denmark; 1960 in Montreal, Canada; 1972 in Tokyo, Japan; and 1985 in Paris. By 1973, of course, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) had been established. ICAE, too, has hosted a number of international conferences. As is apparent, therefore, adult educators have for many years recognized their common concerns around the globe.

The phenomenon of an international dimension to the adult education movement or even adult education as a worldwide movement, however, is only a step along the way to the articulation of international adult education as a field of study and practice.

The latter implies more than the involvement of representatives from different countries working with and learning from each other. Rather, it implies a cadre of (trained) professionals and practitioners who identify themselves as international adult educators and who work for and with international and perhaps transnational concerns. It also implies a knowledge base to the field and a host of researchers and professionals studying the area and laying a more solid foundation for practice. The extent to which even these modest criteria are met, however, is an area in need of further inquiry.

Toward a Clarification of Terms

Also fundamental, it seems, is a need for more clarity with regard to a number of related terms, among them: international/cultural, multi-national/cultural, cross-cultural, transnational/cultural, and comparative. The Thesaurus of Descriptors which guides the ERIC system suggests some distinctions. Comparative (adult) education, for example, is described as a "field of study dealing with comparison of educational theory and practice in different countries," while international (adult) education refers to the "study of educational, social, political, economic, and environmental forces of international relations with special emphasis on the role and potentialities of educational forces." Thus international is a term which is clearly wider in scope than comparative. One might also note that International Educational Exchange is an entirely separate term which signifies "exchange among nations of instructional materials, techniques, students, teachers, and techniques for purposes of sharing knowledge and furthering international understanding."

Multicultural education, on the other hand, may not have an international dimension to it in terms of geographic boundaries, but may merely deal with various ethnic groups even within the same national boundaries. As described in the ERIC "scope note" it is "education involving two or more ethnic groups and designed to help participants clarify their own ethnic identity and appreciate that of others, reduce prejudice and stereotyping and promote cultural pluralism and equal participation." A qualifying note alerts the reader not to confuse the term with "cross-cultural training" which, prior to January, 1979, was frequently used for multi-cultural education. It is interesting to observe that "international" is not listed as a related term for multicultural education but intercultural is.

Cross-cultural training, then, is noted as "training in communicative, behavioral, and attitudinal skills required for successful interaction with individuals of other cultures--often used with personnel about to undertake overseas assignments." Again, international is not a related term. Consequently, if one were to conduct a literature search which employed only the descriptor "international" one may miss publications which deal with some skills and competencies which are important to the practice or profession of international adult education.

Cross-cultural studies is a term which should likewise not be overlooked: "systematic efforts to compare sociological, psychological, anthropological aspects of two or more cultural groups, either within the same country or in different countries."

An additional term which may be of related value particularly in helping us better embrace the literature and activities of the whole territory is global approach defined as: "An approach to social, cultural, scientific, and humanistic questions involving an orientation to the world as a single interacting system." It is this term in fact which is used for "international approach" in the ERIC system.

Transnational and transcultural have not yet appeared as descriptors in the ERIC files or in any other system to the writer's knowledge. Mention is made, however, by Spaulding, Colucci, & Flint (1982) about the emergence of "transnational specialists" discussed below.

Although etymologically speaking international denotes between or among nations and transnational, of course, beyond nations, it is the transnational issues or elements--those that transcend national and cultural boundaries--which become dynamic forces in contributing to the development of international adult education as a field of both study and practice. For example, with regard to practice, an evolving number of professionals are beginning to see themselves as "transnational" specialists (as noted above) since they are interested in global problems or worldwide dynamics of issues more than with a specific country or countries. As a field of study, investigation and articulation of transnational/transcultural foundations has the potential to lend cohesiveness. For example, recent research particularly that of Heath (1977)--reveals commonalities in the maturation/adult development process among a number of different countries. Such research, along with that which studies the transpersonal self (i.e., beyond individual person, culture, etc.) (for example, Boucouvalas, 1984a, 1984b, 1985a), has the potential to lay a solid foundation for development of: (a) Professionals who identify themselves as international adult educators (field of practice), (b) A common knowledge base (field of study).

As we work toward further developing and refining international adult education as a field of both study and practice we can perhaps at least agree that at present international adult education appears to be a term applied to a wide variety of activities, as well as research interests. My own notion of what this may include follows.

As a field of practice...

As a field of "practice" international adult education may include a variety of individuals in a number of roles, in a multitude of specific activities and problem areas, as well as more general thrusts.

Individual roles - may vary. Among them are: scholar, researcher, consultant, businessperson, citizen, learning facilitator, and learner.

Organizations involved - transnational, multicultural, national, intergovernmental and nongovernmental bodies; associations and councils; foundations and private agencies (some international organizations such as ICAE, ICO, ILSC, FAO, and others continue to act as catalysts).

Four general thrusts seem prepotent:

1. Education for global awareness and understanding (including international attitude as well as knowledge)
2. Education for development (individual, organization, community, and nation-building)
3. Education for peace
4. Research and publications

Examples of specific emphases and activities in any one or more of the above thrusts might include:

Preparation of professionals for international service (e.g., language training, cross-cultural service, etc.)

Educational and cultural exchange of students, faculty, and other professionals, as well as lay people. Included also would be study tours and teams. Academic and scholarly organizations, intergovernmental agencies, private voluntary organizations, and others would be involved in such efforts.

Technical cooperation among countries (in years past referred to as technical aid or assistance). This change in name may represent an increasing movement toward interdependence.

Involved is the education of lay people, educators, and other professionals, as well as organizational and community development and nation-building and "inter-nation-building" efforts. Education for social action and responsibility is emergent. Education for international attitude, as well as knowledge seems critical. Ultimately, development of the species-at-large as in the nurturance of a planetary attitude and consciousness seems hopeful.

Special populations of individuals are being targeted as part of international adult education efforts. For example: workers, nonliterates, disabled, prison inmates, women, elderly, and others. A number of program area emphases are likewise distinguishable--for example: literacy, health education, and others. One should, perhaps, not overlook the education of educators--particularly adult educators in this regard. Moreover, a cadre of research pursuits and publications are being produced by individuals (or organizations) who may view such activities as their area of "practice."

International adult education also has its historical components which perhaps can be best understood by turning to a discussion of international adult education as a field of study.

As a field of study...

Three major components (and there may be more) can be delineated:

1. Historical evolution and progression of international adult education as a field
2. Focus on specific countries or areas
3. Focus on the world

1. Historical evolution and progression of international adult education as a field
    a. Evolution from programmatic emphases -> process -> movement; movement from comparative -> international; movement from research on or for to include research with (participatory research)
    b. Role of a variety of international bodies (UNESCO, ICAE, ILSC, and others) in:
        1. Catalyzing or contributing to global progression of adult education
        2. Building a common identity and bond among educators of adults worldwide
    c. Role of and relation to other (international) fields and other disciplines e.g., International education, International politics--also psychology, sociology, anthropology, and others
2. Focus on specific countries or areas around the world
    a. Individual case studies
        1. Unique contribution of specific countries and how we might learn from each other
        2. Frameworks and methods (and the development of new ones) for investigating and studying adult

education in one's country or a country other than one's own.

        3. Sources, resources, and approaches (as well as importance of) understanding whole context in which adult education occurs: political, economic, social, cultural, religious, etc.

    b. Comparative study of adult education among various countries

3. Focus on the world

    a. State of the world and humanity (transnational and transcultural foundations and concerns)

        1. World context as a frame and undergirding to the study of international adult education (e.g. social, political, economic, etc. Also nature of interconnectedness and other global issues such as hunger, population, energy, arms control, etc.)

        2. The human context, e.g. cross-cultural and transcultural notions of the (maturing) adult, modes of thought, etc.

    b. Global problems and the contribution of adult education

        1. As a part of problem

        2. As part of solution

In addition, as a field of study one would be concerned with an examination of issues and trends, as well as with future studies. Perhaps one might also want to investigate and generate competencies needed by an international adult educator.

Toward the Future

This effort has been a modest attempt to begin a discussion and hopefully catalyze a dialogue on conceptualizing international adult education as a field of study and practice. As stressed, moving beyond the notion of an international perspective or dimension to adult education, international adult education as a field of study and practice implies: (a) A knowledge base, with researchers and professionals studying the area, particularly to lay a foundation for practice. (b) Trained professionals and practitioners who identify themselves as international adult educators. This distinction between a *perspective* or *dimension* and a *field* seems critical . A needed future effort is to review the above criteria, perhaps generate others, determine how well the criteria are met, and of course, what needs to be done for international adult education to more fully become a *field* of both study and practice. Perhaps others may also begin to articulate their own renditions of the status and scope of international adult education as a field of study and practice.

Again, I urge you to join me in enlarging and deepening this incipient inquiry.

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INTERNATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE YOUNGER ADULT

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Introduction

Many questions can be asked of comparative adult education by the uninitiated: why have it? what purpose does it serve? how does one go about it?, all of which seem very pertinent. However these questions are less significant to the 'old hand' as the value of comparative adult education is unquestionable. Indeed there is no better way of gaining insight into the process of one's own educational system than through comparing it with a foreign system. It is only in this way that the strengths and weaknesses of one's own contemporary scene can be judged. However, comparative analysis is a skill and needs to be treated with care.

There are many difficulties associated with comparative analysis that arise out of dealing with more than one national context. In particular, there is the problem of developing criteria for analysis that will transcend national boundaries. In practice this is very difficult to achieve and results in the problem of relating theoretical concepts to observed and experienced perceptions of reality. Although this is germane to all educational research, the issue is compounded in comparative studies by the nature of the work.

In this paper the problems associated with the derivation of criteria for comparative analysis will be addressed. In doing so, it will identify some of the major conceptual issues that are involved. However, the scope of the paper makes it necessary to limit the analysis, and one sub-group of the adult population will be taken as the focus for study. The chosen group is that comprising young adults. It is hoped, however, that any loss in generality will be compensated for by the depth of treatment provided and still prove informative to the field in general.

Young adults shall be defined here to be that section of the lifelong process that falls between the ages of 15 years and 25 years; the years that Bromley calls late adolescence and early adulthood (1966:20). Thus young adults form the group of people at the point of departure into 'full' adulthood, or those individuals whose greater awareness of the lifelong process is slowly emerging with their increasing involvement and participation in the development of the society within which they live.

However in attempting to derive criteria for this group (or any other for that matter), at least three approaches could be explored. The first would be to analyse formal government policy documents, and by restricting the analysis to statements concerning the area of young adults, list the similarities and differences found. This list could then be used to form the basis for analysis. Secondly, one could do fieldwork, to examine experientially and describe systems of education that are different from one's own. In this case, the method would be to describe and analyse the foreign system, properly contextualised, so as to illuminate alternative perspectives - those that are of value to the native society. These could then be used as a basis for comparision and analysis. Finally, there is the literature, the existing body of knowledge that might be tapped for ideas, advice and a way forward. It is this final alternative that will be developed here.

Towards a Criteria for Analysis

To derive a set of criteria for comparative analysis, a three stage process shall be adopted. Firstly, the place of young adults within the wider process of lifelong learning will be assessed. Secondly, the needs of young adults in relation to continuing adult education will be identified. Finally to place the first two stages on firm comparative ground, the effects of national and political contexts will be considered.

1. The Role of Young Adults in Lifelong Learning

The centrality of 'youth education' in the context of life was made clear by King (King, et al 1975), when he spoke of young adults occupying the 'frontier position' on the 'threshold of uncertainty'. In this section we shall be concerned with the transition of young adults across this 'threshold' and in particular the features of lifelong learning that such a transition should address. These features not only act as a springboard to adult roles and responsibilities, but may also provide the first steps towards criteria for comparative analysis.

Probably the most comprehensive 'check-list' of characteristics for lifelong learning and education is that provided by Dave (1976:53) in a check-list that comprises no less than 25 items. However, while almost all of these bear some relevance to the transitional education of the younger adult, we shall only concern ourselves here with the most salient. By this we shall mean those items that are most pertinent to the process of transition.

To help identify these more salient items, three observations can be made concerning young adults in transition. Firstly, that the transition of young adults to adult roles involves all young adults. Secondly, that each individual in transition, needs to be presented with a clear and meaningful picture of where he/she is and where it is possible to get to. Finally, as identified in the Thompson report (1981), young adults should be given every opportunity, during transition, to take on progressivelymore responsibility and participate in the society within which they live.

Following these observations, it would now appear that three characteristics of Dave's check-list stand out as clearly relevant. They are: democratisation, vertical articulation and horizontal integration. Democratisation will be taken here to mean education that is 'open' to everybody at a particular stage in their life. In the case of young adults this would mean 'free access' (Goad 1984) to undergo continuing education and/or training, during the transition from compulsory schooling to adult life beyond school.

However as Halls points out (Halls 1985) access, while free, may still contain elements of selection. This will be particularly true when choices exist. In such cases selection on non-meritocratic terms (in what ever sense) may take place and be diversive to educational equality.

Vertical articulation is defined here to be that which relates to a 'smooth change of life roles at different periods in the life-span' (Dave 1976:54). Vertical articulation is thus the basic requirement for continuity and a meaningful progression, or as Berger stated (1974:194), a 'cognitive map of reality', a reality for young adults that should be represented by a rational and intelligible sequence of experiences. Experiences form the basis through which, on reflection and analysis, learning can be related to the individual's psychological and biological growth and social integration taking place in the context of everyday life. For young adults the major change is from a position of independence, with a high degree of supervision in most activities, to independence and adult roles. Clearly all forms of education and training for young adults should aid and support this transition; a transition to self-initiated learning and responsibility.

Horizontal integration (following Dave) is defined here to mean the integration of the learning process across a broad range of areas. Dave suggests that the following should be considered as a start; 'home', 'neighbourhood', 'local community', 'larger society', 'the world of work', 'mass media', 'recreational', 'cultural', 'religious and other agencies'. He also recognises the need for integration with 'aspects of development' such as the growth of the body and its facilities, as well as between the subjects of study.

Taking these three items from Dave's checklist on board, we shall now move on to consider the needs of young adults in relation to continuing education.

2. The Needs of Young Adults in Relation to Continuing Education

It was stated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development that,

> 'Education and training issues can then be seen in the broader context of overall youth policies and this focuses attention on the needs and interests of all young people instead of considering in relative isolation the various institutions or sectors where young people are found.' (OECD 1985a:76)

This observation is important because, in order to facilitate the development of young adults careful consideration must be made of the learner's needs - a consideration of the 'different aspects of their development over time'. In the case of young adults this would be their developmental characteristics between the ages of 15 years and 25 years; in particular their psychological development during this time span.

The importance of the psychological development of young adults has been indicated in recent work reported from the United States of America (Darkenwald and Knox 1984). Moreover, the development of identity, independence and the experience of intimacy were highlighted as essential areas of growth for young adults during the period of transition. However, for individual stability and maturity the research also stressed that education of young adults should be related firmly to progression - progression to 'adult roles and responsibilities' (aspects of vertical articulation). The findings are also supported, in the wider context, by the World Survey of Youth 1978 which stated,

> 'their main goal in life was to achieve a satisfactory family life and to gain some economic and social success.' (OECD 1985b:44)

However, differentials may exist here and this should be recognised. For example, economic success for a rural tribesman from Botswana will be qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of a successful North American football player. Indeed economic success in the third world is often equated with the prized access to social mobility (Dore 1976). Mobility may be culturally controlled by caste and skin colour, or educationally controlled by certification.

Thus, while cultural needs and constraints may differ between regions and countries, to be effective, the education and training of young adults must adequately cater for the psychological development of individuals within their own social context through the transition to adulthood. Thus in summary, for comparative analysis of the education and training of young adults in the context of continuing adult education, it can be argued that the following areas need be considered:

i. The level and nature of democratisation between systems of education - the question of free and equal access

ii. The vertical articulation used by different countries, both structurally (in linking the provision longitudinally) as well as methodologically, in helping participants through the transition of life stages.

iii. The horizontal integration of young adults into adult roles and responsibilities.

iv The level of attendance given to the psychological development of young adults - in becoming aware, involved and developed.

However, to undertake any form of comparative analysis, attention must also be paid to the context in which the analysis takes place. A context which, in the case of young adults, will involve substantial government intervention.

3. Government Intervention in the Education and Training of Young Adults

Across the world, the central role of governments in the initiation and support of the education and training of young adults makes their definition of 'needs' a major factor for consideration. However, programmes for young adults are usually initiated as a means of developing the skills required for manpower planning (skills related to national development).As such, political and economic expediency often become the foremost consideration in the design of programmes from the government perspective. Further to this, as Seers (1983) notes, the political economy of a nation depends on its ability to use and develop its size, location, resource base, 'ethnic basis for nationalism' and political leadership. This stresses that the provision of education and training in a national context requires the development of a labour force with requisite political orientation as well as academic and technological skills, that is, the development of an outlook on life that will enhance national development in the particular national context.

The importance of the national context, in relation to political outlooks, cannot be understated. As Raffe (1985) identifies, the national (and local) context in which a programme operates can be as important as the programme content itself. When new courses are under consideration this is particularly true, as no educational reform can neglect the constraints that are placed upon it by labour market requirements and individual needs for continuing education (Oxenham 1984). It is therefore necessary for the comparative analysis of the education and training of young adults to place such an analysis within specific national contexts. It is only within particular national contexts that interpretation and meaning can be given to the needs of young adults and the criteria that has been suggested. The point is that however the criteria are defined in one context, it is quite likely they will be interpreted differently elsewhere, making direct comparisions difficult.

In particular, politics and political economy have marked effects on the interpretation and definition of terms. For example in a capitalist economy (UK for example) 'access' to continuing education and training may well be subject to market forces, with these leading to a variety of educational routes - with each linked to a specific entry point in the labour market. In a socialist economy on the other hand, 'access' (in a centralised education system) can be virtually compulsory with a single route for all individuals. It would therefore be naive to consider 'free access' as defined earlier, in terms of lifelong education, in isolation from particular political, economic and social structures that underpin it. It is the nature of political and social underpinning that gives meaning to the words 'free' and 'access'.

The same is also true for vertical articulation. Here, however, there are two major political considerations - centralisation and co-ordination. Taking centralisation first, it is the degree of centralisation that matters. In theory, the greater the degree of political centralisation, the tighter the control over education and the higher the chance of producing meaningful and systematic progression (Archer 1984). However although a high degree of centralisation can provide a comprehensive structure, the co-ordination of individuals' movement within it - their passage and progress - is not guaranteed.

This point is particularly significant in the case of young adults, as more than one government ministry or department is often involved or responsible for some aspect of the total provision,

> 'No institution has a clear and fully accepted
> responsibility for following the welfare of persons
> through the stage of young adulthood'
> (OECD 1985:8).

A similar point is made by King,

> 'Many countries' school systems, too, have the secondary
> stage marked into two distinct cycles, which nowdays
> seldom coincide with the legal age-frontier between
> compulsory and post-compulsory education'
> (King 1985:42).

For these reasons co-ordination of vertical articulation can (and often does) become a complex struggle between ministries and government departments for power and resources - a struggle that in a decentralised educational system is further confused by a number of private agencies, external to the system, all of which are competing for a stake in the market (Archer 1984).

Finally, horizontal integration, too, only becomes viable in the above sense through careful co-ordination at the national, regional and local levels. It is totally dependent on the co-operation afforded to it by ministries, departments, institutions (both public and private) and other employers, agencies, local interest groups and networks. A willingness to give up time and effort to become involved in broadening and extending the curriculum.

Thus, in summary, it has been suggested that democratisation, vertical articulation and horizontal integration (though complex in nature) could be used to form a basic set of criteria for the comparative analysis of the younger adults in relation to adult continuing education. What has also been identified is that such an analysis should cater for the psychological growth of young adults and pay particular attention to the meaning given to the criteria in specific national and political contexts - contexts that need to be understood and conveyed.

To conclude, it should be stressed that any criteria used for comparative analysis needs to be accurately defined and to portray the native understanding of the concepts under study. For it is only then that comparative analysis will contribute valuable new perspectives to the content and process of adult education.

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EDUCATION FOR CHANGE: SOME ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION

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"It is no time to go for the doctor when the patient is dead" (Gaffney & Cashman, 1982)

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines some of the issues in discussing education for change. In particular, in relation to international comparative adult education. It is hoped that in doing so, it will highlight some relevant points for consideration in comparative studies. For this paper I have taken comparative adult education to be the comparative study of adult education theories, practices and systems. Because the subject matter is so vast, I am concentrating on some main streams of thought around which the debate revolves.

Global trends in educational theory and the philosophy of adult education, without exception stress that the world is currently in a period of unprecedented rapid change (see for example, Toffler: 1974:4; Boshier: 1986:23). Also that adult education has to address itself to its role in this changing world, or in this age of what Botkin (1979:17) calls "discontinuity".

Boucouvalas (June 1985:48) states that international adult education as a field of study and practice, represents a movement which goes beyond ethnocentric understanding, in which adult education is perceived and treated as a worldwide movement in scope. Yet within the movement there are substantial differences in the nature and functions of adult education (see Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982:189-246).

Education for change, for example, may be conceptualised in a number of ways and at a number of levels. From whatever standpoint it is viewed, however, it will need to be seen in an ideological framework, reflecting the prevailing values of the individual, group or society in which it is set.

In adult education, two major concepts of education for change emerge. Each concern the role of adult education in this process and the nature of learning.

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1. Paper written for the International and Comparative Adult Education Conference at the University of Hull 9-10 July 1986.

One refers to the nature of MAINTENANCE learning. In this approach the role of adult education is to help people and societies ADAPT to change. The other addresses itself to the nature of ANTICIPATORY or INNOVATIVE learning, for which the role of adult education is to INFLUENCE or CONTROL change. I will look at these concepts separately.

EDUCATION FOR CHANGE: A Maintenance Model

Traditionally adult education has concentrated on the past or what is already known (McIntosh, 1986:177). As Boshier (1986:15) says, adult education programmes are often justified because they meet known needs. Buskey and Sork (1982), quoted in Boshier, (1986:15) in their study of the planning of 90 adult education programmes, confirmed that most included "needs analysis" in the planning process. I have not seen the details of this study but its findings clearly reflect what is considered to be an integral part of adult education theory and practice.

Harris (1980: 29-32) in his identification of common factors which help to shape a pattern of adult education in any community, discusses the needs of individuals and the community and how organisations and institutions promote adult education as a necessary part of their own development.

Education for change and the maintenance learning framework is based on certain assumptions. These are primarily that

(i) learning from the past and what is already known will help people and societies cope with the present and

(ii) the past will inevitably repeat itself (McIntosh, 1986:177)

As Boshier (1986:15) points out therefore, the traditional needs-satisfaction approach to adult education, is essentially reactive. That is, it is supposed to relieve tension-states and is primarily designed to maintain or adapt people to the status quo. For example, positive discrimination programmes to redress discrimination based on race, sex or social background (Botkin, 1979:77), assume a sort of "catching-up" profile, where adult educators are essentially passively waiting until individuals or systems experience tension or strain (Boshier, 1986:18) in order to act.

Some arguments revolving around maintenance learning are

1. to what particularly are adult educationalists helping people and societies to adapt?
2. how does the adaptive process manifest itself?

Adapting to What?

Gelpi (1980:19) reminds us that knowledge, learning and education do not always develop in the direction of democratizing a given society. Thus adapting to the status quo which Boshier (1986) suggests is the traditional role of adult education in maintenance learning, may serve to perpetuate social and economic inequalities. In the acquisition of new skills/knowledge etc. for example, prevailing norms may include the who and what has decided the nature of the skills and knowledge? Two cases illustrate the differences between a Western and Third World perspective, when the concept of literacy is involved.

One of the bases of competency-based adult education (CBE) in the United States of America (USA) is the concept of functional literacy. Ulmer and Dinnan (1980:29) point out that educators and legislators in the USA, have defined functional literacy (at its minimal level) in terms of the completion of high school or its equivalent. They quote estimates, among nine identified areas of Adult Functional Competence, that 16.4 per cent of adults in the USA function with difficulty in writing, 21.7 per cent in reading and 32.9 per cent in computation. The figures, quoted by Worthington (1985:185-187) not only support these but suggest that they are an 'underestimation of the total problem of functional literacy'.

These writers are quoting the concept of adaptive learning needed as a necessity for individual and societal survival in the USA (Worthington, 1985:185). Ulmer and Dinnan (1980) specifically in the context of formal education.

This interpretation of survival skills or its "institutionalised" framework, may not be helpful in other cultures and societies.

In 1980, there were 900 million people in Commonwealth countries of whom 100 million live in rich countries and 800 million in poor ones; 150 million of the children below the age of eight exist in conditions of under nourishment or malnutrition (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1980).

In this context, Manzoor Ahmed (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980:11) at the Commonwealth Conference on Non-Formal Education for Development held in Delhi lists assumptions about literacy programmes which he says are invalid.

He cites the case of a well-conceived and well-managed literacy effort in Bangladesh of a voluntary organisation called the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). He concludes, giving other examples, that in a primitive rural economy in which people are engaged in subsistence activities, literacy is not a practical necessity. Indeed David Harman (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980:13) states that everywhere else but Cuba, literacy campaigns of every kind have almost always failed. Kenneth King (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980:18) suggests that literacy divorced from life styles will either be lost or never acquired. King was referring to a report by the International Labour Office on Lagos, where the government wanted to train apprentices for employment where, the lack of jobs in the first place, had resulted in people being forced into subsistence employment.

To grossly oversimplify the explanation, there is a clash of perceptions between providers/organisers and participants in interpretations of maintenance learning, or how adaptive learning is relevant to its consumers. The differences above illustrate that concepts in adult education have to be interpreted in the contexts in which they are to be used. Also it highlights problems, when perceived needs of individuals and societies do not necessarily coincide. Maslow (1968:153) lists hierarchies of needs in which survival needs are considered to be the basis for all others.

Criticisms of Maintenance Learning

Toffler (1974), Cowan (1983), Botkin (1979) and Boshier (1986) among others identify the problems inherent on relying on the past and present as a guide to future projections. Maintenance learning and adaptation to change relies on a catching up process, and there is a constant human gap. It implies that human beings can only react to follow new changes in a given environment, hurrying to catch up with uncontrollable mutations, having no power to forestall or even influence them (Botkin, 1979:48).

McIntosh (1986:178) says that some economic, social, gender and age groups are not prepared to adapt to the status quo, or to accept the past as a blueprint for the future.

Thus while Kassas (1979: 136) et al. in Botkin (1979) suggests that adaptive or maintenance learning will continue to be both practical and necessary, several problems in the learning process focus on a need to create new alternatives, among other ways through comparative studies.

An alternative model of education for change is that of innovative or anticipatory learning.

EDUCATION FOR CHANGE: An Innovative Model

The aim of innovative learning is to help individuals and societies to be able to foresee or anticipate change (McIntosh, 1986:178). It also helps them to influence or determine change. In fact, Rogers and Groombridge (1976) infer that adult education is a vital "tool for survival".

Botkin (1979: 12-13) suggests that the essence of anticipating events, lies in selecting desirable events and working towards them. This confronts the educator with searching questions about what Hostler (1981:13) refers to as the "right direction of social progress". As Warren (1977:340) points out, the task of subjecting social change to human purpose is a highly complex one. There is also the problem of "marrying" needs and expectations at different levels, say at individual and societal level. As does the whole debate on education for change, ethical issues may be paramount here. Personal morality and social morality do not always coincide (Warren, 1977:310). This apart from meeting global/planetary needs.

A main concern of international comparative adult educationalists is to identify how meanings can be utilized to help understand the different contexts in which learning occurs. This may help to identify at a global level what is needed for the development of an "acceptable" future for the planet (see, for example, Boucouvalas, June 1985:51, Botkin, 1979:22 and Kirschenbaum and Simon, 1974:157-270).

Another concern for adult educationalists is to identify what it is that impedes invididuals and different societies, to formulate decisions about their future aims and objectives. Roles of the formal educational systems in relation to the populace may be one area. An analysis of societal "hidden" curriculum, for example, control of the mass media, may be another. What are the optimal conditions for people to be involved in innovative learning?

Individuals are the vehicle through which change is brought (Boshier, 1986:20). McIntosh (1986:180) illustrates, examples, from her own practice. Yet Buchen (1974:137) believes that the emerging image of the individual must be collectivised. In doing so, she will be capable of sustaining many allegiances without contradiction, on both a national and international scale, and be closer to being (as in achieving self-realisation) especially through the concepts of global perspectives. In fact, a world citizen. Buchen (1974:137) poses the problem of how someone can be educated to become a collectivised individual.

Criticisms of Innovative Learning

An argument against innovative learning is that as interrelationships are so complex, understanding becomes more difficult (Botkin, 1979:19). Innovative learning is seen as a reaction against "tried and true" methods set in traditional frameworks. Boshier (1986:26), for example, believes that the widespread recourse to religious fundamentalism in the USA is related to uncertainty evoked by economic depression and psychological despair. As McKenzie (1984:88) says that to believe that history (ones personal history and/or the history of mankind) is controlled by fate, providence, or historical laws brings with it a kind of "cosmic security blanket".

Another criticism underlies the elitist position of those in formal education and state institutions and hierarchies. If individuals are capable of making decisions about their own growth and learning needs, then the formal educator becomes either redundant or has to adopt a different role.

Hostler (1981:13) says that the possibility of controlling social change is rendered doubtful, because our institutions and social structures are often far more complex than they appear. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:243), too, believe that since the 1920s and 1930s the belief that adult education could contribute in a major way to improving the social and political order has been eroded.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Harris (1980:9) suggests three stages of study in comparative adult education. These are securing awareness, question-raising and professional research. In this paper I have considered some issues in the context of adult education for change.

Education for change is be a fundamental theme to which international comparative adult education has to concern itself. This will range from an individual to a planetary level.

I began by defining comparative adult education as the comparative study o adult education theories, practicesand systems. As can be seen in this short paper there are many conflicting views, when examining international perspectives on education for change.

Theories of adult education consistently stress the part of needs analysis in its curriculum development. Yet historically in practice this has meant programmes designed to maintain existing systems. Enough has been written for example about the need for women to be involved in the economic structures of society, yet no country seems to have given the question of men's role in the nursery and kitchen any sort of top priority (Tavris and Offir 1977;295).

If global needs are to be addressed by adult educationalists, education to predict change is relevant. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:203) list five programme areas of adult education in the Third World which need to be addressed. These are literacy, civic and political education, health and family life programmes, and agricultural and vocational education.

Similar areas of study are relevant to developed Western societies otherwise there is still an assumption that these issues are somehow "developed" outside of the Third World context.

Throughout the literature on adult education and education for change, participation is considered to be an absolute prerequisite for fulfilling certain aims, especially in respect of consciousness-raising activities of individuals and groups. Yet the whole concept of participation may need to be examined. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:242) say that it is evident to most educators that participation in organised educational activities is no guarantee of learning.

This may, of course, depend on what learning is expected to be guaranteed! Also how "participation" is interpreted. Being physically present does not necessarily mean participation.

Luminosu (1985:215-218) writing of adult education in socialist Romania says that the development of motivation for adult learning, creativity and participation is, aided by innovative and anticipative learning. He writes of how citizen participation assimilates and creates values, as well as a "conscious participation in the political and socio-cultural governing of the country and building their own destinies". It would be interesting here, to have a comparative study of innovative learning of the experience of adult education students in Romania with those in a Western capitalist society, to see how innovative learning is interpreted in these different cultures. Such a study may be an example to examine whether common trends exist or otherwise between such different politically structured cultures.

Faced with the apparent enormity of the problem, it may well be asked, how can a start be made to address the issues contained in this paper. Botkin (1979:18-19) suggests that two basic ways to reduce complexity can be envisaged. The first is "to attempt to simplify reality. Although there may be complaints of reductionism, there does seem to be some sense in the saying that "the longest journey begins with the smallest step". Secondly complexity has to be "absorbed" by differentiating, restructuring and improving our means to cope with it via our learning processes. Perhaps, an emphasis on learning how to learn as suggested by Robert Smith (1982:19) rather than learning what to learn, could be a start?

At an individual level Boucouvalas (1985:55) suggests ways in which transpersonal experience with an aim of global identity, can be realised. That may be the most appropriate place from where to begin. At the same time it would be relevant for international comparative adult education to define some terms of reference, including some practical issues on how to gain experience of different cultures and educational systems.

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REPORT OF THE KELLOGG FELLOWS (1986) TO THE INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION FORUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL, ENGLAND, JULY 1986

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This report was presented by the six 1986 Kellogg Fellows, supported by two Fellows from 1985 who were attending the Forum as follows:

1986 Fellows
Barry Bright (Hull), Nod Miller (Manchester), Clare Jones (Bristol), Ian Haffenden (Surrey), Clive Pemberton (Nottingham), Athalinda McIntosh (Surrey)

1985 Fellows
Miriam Zukas (Leeds), Paul Armstrong (Hull)

CONTEXT

The group had already reported back to the International Interest Group at the Annual Conference of SCUTREA which had preceded this Forum. At that meeting several requests were made that a broader experiential view of the American visit by the Kellogg Fellows be conveyed to the Forum. To that end the session on the programme had been given the title 'The Magnificent Eight' or 'Syracuse by Starlight, Moonlight and Electric Light'.

METHOD

After a great deal of discussion as to the best way to present the enormous amount of experiential material in a meaningful way, the group decided to use a descriptive ecological research presentation as advocated by Merriam and Simpson (1984: 113-116). According to Barker (1968) ecological research methods are used as a heuristic strategy in discovering knowledge, rather than as tools to verify knowledge.

As Wiseman and Aron (1970: 238) state, this approach grew from the interests of anthropologists using the phenomenological form in which the central focus of the method is a reconstruction of the participants' perspective on their situations.

The particular technique for this session was the detailed narrative of specific actions of participants including how they behaved, treated others and were treated by others during their interactions in America (Merriam and Simpson, 1984: 114, Wiseman and Aron, 1970: 249). The whole emphasis was on presenting some research which might induce a 'Verstehen' or understanding of the experience of the Fellows to the group to which it was presented.

In order to classify the information, the data was summarized on flip-charts to be displayed in the Conference room, as a basis for a discussion of conference members. The data was grouped under the following headings. Two examples from each chart are given to illustrate the content of the material. In fact, what we gained went on to several sheets.

Heading	Example
What we gained	Motivation for academic pursuit More insight into the diverse possibilities of conferences as a learning experience
What we lost	Stereotypes of Americans as a race The belief that all American bathrooms are immaculate
Terms we learned	'Visiting with' (American) means 'speak to' (English) 'Restroom' (American) means 'Toilet' (English)
Things we missed	(Of England) The Cup Final (Of America) The American lecturer/teacher relationship which seems to be less formal than here

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ensuing discussion showed the difficulty in establishing the reliability and validity of experiential research, in that the phenomenological experiences of some group members were not congruent with those as presented by the Kellogg Fellows.

No attempt (because of limit of time) was made to analyze these differences, except in relation to cultural and sub-cultural differences in interpretation.

Heritage (1984: 213-217) suggests that resistance to perceived conflicting material may arise from the assumption of the existence of an objective and unitary world in the eye of the beholder, in which others are expected to perceive and recognize the same world as they do. It could be that some members of the conference group had formulated more precise views of an American experience in light of individual extended exposure of it. The Kellogg Presentation was an amalgam of individuals experiences and in itself did, therefore, present inconsistencies.

The Kellogg group had not attempted to reconcile individual differences, but it seemed from the discussion that this issue of intersubjectivity is paramount to the presentation of ecological research - that is, a formal acknowledgement of the difficulties inherent in the presentation of material which may conflict in content and process from expectations of the recipient group. This is especially important when 'institutional' issues are also being considered. In this case the justification for the allocation of resources for overseas visits was one which was identified.

Heritage draws from Pollner in putting forward means of dealing with such conflicts in the face of what he refers to as 'maintaining institutional realities'. One means is in reporting an event that is recognisable and accountable within the relevant institutional framework of accounts (Heritage 1984: 229). This account is an attempt to do that.

CONCLUSION

The session highlighted the need for continued and sustained international research and development, particularly in ecological terms. A major reason was to establish the need for tolerance and understanding of differences in perception.

Another major reason was to examine how these differences influence adult education and learning. Both of these were among the primary rationale for obtaining a Kellogg award.

A third reason which emerged from the session was the one which considers the role of the individual within an established 'institutional' framework when new areas of research and presentation are being considered.

The session in fact became a microcosm of some major problems in addressing international and comparative issues in adult education, in particular, a prevailing need to integrate material from different perspectives into a coherent basis for research and discussion. Experiential material has a special place in this process to expand cognitive awareness, to avoid the trap of reductionism and to examine generally the relevance and potency of intersubjectivity in order to evaluate and re-evalute existing hegemonic normative frameworks of account and practice.

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SCUTREA CONFERENCE 1986

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